BING

Winter
2012

No. 162

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

Web sites:
Club: www.club-crosby.org
Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com
BING magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Honorary President: KATHRYN CROSBY
Honorary Members: Harry Crosby - Mary Crosby Brodka - Nathaniel Crosby - Phillip Crosby Jr. Ken Barnes - Pat Boone - Rory Burke - Nick Clooney - Michael Feinstein - Rich Little Regis Philbin - Gia Prima - Andy Williams
Special Distribution: Gonzaga University - Hofstra University - Library of Congress - Spokane Public Library - Tacoma Public Library -

Magazine Editor
MALCOLM MACFARLANE
3 Osborne Close
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 2EE, UK
Tel: 01625 528942
e-mail: Macwilmslo@aol.com

Secretary and Treasurer
MICHAEL CRAMPTON
19 Carrholm Crescent
Chapel Allerton
Leeds LS7 2NL , UK
Tel/Fax: 0113 2689556
e-mail: mdcrampton@gmail.com

American Co-Editor
GREG VAN BEEK
3006 Emerald Street,
West Bend
Wisconsin 53095, USA
Tel: (262) 343-2986
e-mail: tvanbeek@execpc.com

American / Canadian Representative
F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS
5608 North 34th Street
Arlington
Virginia 22207, USA
Tel/Fax: (703) 241-5608
e-mail: wigbing2012@gmail.com

Australian / New Zealand Representative
DAVID CURRINGTON
34A Geoffrey Street,
Turramurra, New South Wales
Australia 2074
Tel: (02) 9440 2434
email: dcurro@comcen.com.au

CONTRIBUTORS
American Contributors: Bob Achorn / Martin McQuade / John Newton / Jon Oye / Carolyn Schneider
British Contributors: J. Richard Baker / Ken Crossland / Bob Halls / Keith Parkinson / John Walton
Canadian Contributor: Gord Atkinson

Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2012 are:

USA and Canada	US $25 per annum
UK	£15 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£16 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$40 per annum
Rest of World	£18 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::
(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 2012.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the winter issue of BING magazine! As this normally reaches members during the month of December, I might also say welcome to Christmas. I hope I'm not too early... or too late... Of course, there's no official start to the Christmas season. Each of us seems to get the old Christmas spirit at different times for different reasons. One common reason that gives all of us that Christmas feeling is the voice of Bing Crosby. It's been 35 years since his passing, yet as the years go by, he remains a vital part of Christmas for so many. It is indeed a wonderful legacy to leave behind. Thank you for celebrating it with us by keeping your subscriptions up to date.

We mourn the passing of our honorary member Andy Williams, who left us in September at the age of 84. There will be more on Andy later in this issue, including reminiscences from my co-editor, who had a lovely meeting with him a few years ago. While I never had the same pleasure of meeting this great vocalist, he was always most cordial to me the few times I sent him a photo which just begged for his autograph. I had a delightful time seeing him perform in 2000 when he brought his Christmas show to Milwaukee. As fate would have it, I wound up with front row seats... in the orchestra pit! I could've leaned back and propped my feet up on the stage, I was that close. It was a memorable night, for sure, and Andy was in fine voice.

For those of you who haven't yet taken the plunge and purchased a Blu-ray player, I would highly recommend it. They've come down considerably in price, and make even 'regular' DVD's look somewhat better when viewed through one. There are now two of Bing's movies available in the Blu-ray format; *White Christmas*, (which, in my opinion, is worth the price of a Blu-ray player alone), and now one of his later film efforts has just been released in limited quantities, which Ken Crossland mentions in the *Keeping Track* section of this issue. While not as breathtaking in clarity as *White Christmas*, this new Blu-ray is well worth picking up, as the film has never been released commercially before!

Before I turn it over to Malcolm, who has all the scoop of what you'll find in this issue, let me offer each of my fellow ICC members a very happy, healthy holiday season, and the best of everything for 2013.

Greg Van Beek

I echo Greg's comments about Andy Williams. He really was one of the good guys.

This issue has a variety of articles for your consideration. There is an in-depth report on the Leeds meeting from Bob Halls and a fascinating Bing-related letter from a US soldier in France in 1944. We reprint Lionel Pairpoint's examination of the *Christmas Sing with Bing* series and all the regular contributors are well in evidence too. The Letters page is particularly interesting this time! Our front cover shows a scene from *High Society* and the back cover has been specially designed by Crosby stalwart Arthur Blood.

Sadly, we do not have any news from Bing Crosby Enterprises or Gary Giddins but you will find information about a new Bing release from Sepia Records in this issue. This 'twofer' CD containing the LPs of "Say One for Me" and "The Road to Hong Kong" should be available late in January. Sepia is also planning to issue a CD of some of Bing's songs from the Kraft Music Hall which he never recorded commercially in May 2013 and they hope to follow up later in the year with a CD of songs from Bing's shows for the Armed Forces Radio Service (Command Performance, Mail Call etc.).

On a personal note, I have now completed twenty years as Editor of BING. I have thoroughly enjoyed it and I have been very fortunate indeed to have so much enthusiastic support from so many people. Whilst I am more than happy to continue, I am perfect willing to stand down if there is anyone else who may wish to take over.

Wig has also done 20 years of hard work for the club but we are both surpassed by Michael Crampton who has been toiling on our behalf since 1989. It would be a nice tribute to them both if everyone would make the effort to pay their subscriptions / dues promptly this time around. Don't delay, do it now!

All the best for Christmas and the New Year!

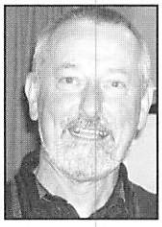
Malcolm Macfarlane

CONTENTS

Page Nos.

Editorial 3
Secretary / Treasurer's Report 4
October 14, 1977 5
A Great Bing Collector Gone 5
The First Crooner: Bing Crosby 6
The US Marine Band 6
The Palladium – in Carmel, Indiana 6
Hofstra + 10 7
Monday, June 1st 1942 9
Bing in France – September 1944 10
Trading Post 12
Books 'n' Bing 15
Memo from Martin 17
Remembering Gary Crosby 20
Celluloid Crosby 21
"Hi Diddle-Dee-Dee..." 23
One Sweet Letter from You 26
Leeds 2012 33
Bing on the Box 41
Once in a While 44
Gord Atkinson's 'The Crosby Years'. 48
The Way We Were 49
Keeping Track 51
For College for Life 54

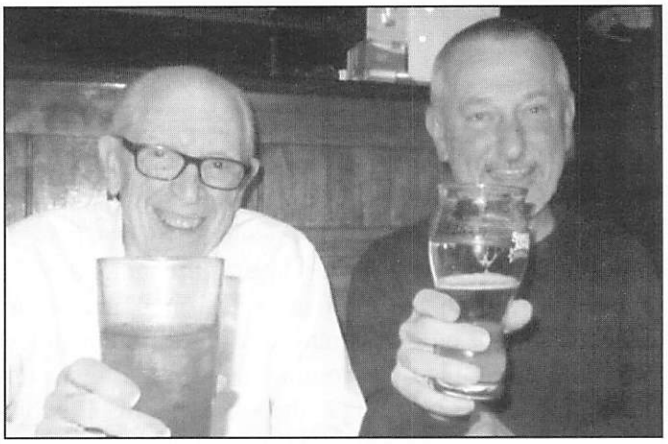
SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT



In my last report I commended our Northern American members for their generous support for ICC funds and their encouragement continues with a substantial legacy from the late Joseph F. Siebenhaar, Jr. of Baltimore, Maryland. Joseph's gift helps ensure a viable ICC into 2013 and we thank the law office of Dennis E. Cuomo for their expeditious handling of the matter

I did promise to report to members on our finances for 2013 and I am pleased to record that since we have received the above legacy and other gifts it will not be necessary to raise subs/dues for 2013. Members will know from our annual accounts that the vast majority of our funds are used to fund the publication and distribution of the magazine and the income from subscriptions does not cover all these costs. The difference is made up by our benefactors who give generously each year and we are truly indebted to them.

On another subject, Judy and I had the great pleasure of meeting up with Wig Wiggins in October during our visit to Washington D.C. and we had a very pleasant night out together.



Michael and Wig sample a local brew.

NEW MEMBERS

It is a pleasure to welcome **Michael Haefner** from Eynatten in Belgium. I am sure that his involvement with the club will bring him interest and enjoyment as he shares his hobby with fellow Bing enthusiasts.

DONATIONS

We very much appreciate the financial help provided by the following generous members from: -

UNITED STATES

US members' generosity continues this issue with the wonderful legacy noted above from the late Joseph F. Siebenhaar and further donations will be acknowledged in 2013.

UNITED KINGDOM

Joseph's benevolence is supported by exceptional gifts from Jeremy Rose, Gerard Hanlon, Renato Failace and the following members who have made some very helpful contributions.

Harry C. Ross, Bob Halls, Bert Bishop, John Benstead, Doreen Hubbard, Tony Peverett, Colin Stewart, Frank Thompson and Ron Holder.

DEATHS

We were very sorry to learn of the deaths of the following members: -

Honorary Member – **Andy Williams** (a tribute is featured in the "Once in a While" section)

Jim Byrne (Derry, Northern Ireland)

Ronald Moss (Hull, East Yorkshire)

We extend our sincere condolences to the family and friends of the members listed above.

Jim Byrne's daughter, Bernadette Healy, has since been in touch and she tells us that Jim had said that the ICC should receive his Bing Crosby collection following his death. It consists of a few hundred audio CDs, an assortment of LP and 78 records, books, catalogues, and ICC calendars. She has generously said that she will arrange to ship it to us in time for the Leeds meeting next year so that it can be offered to members.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 1 to 10 (Sepia Records)

These attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £7.00 and the price for Europe £7.50. Members in the US and Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington. The price for members in the rest of the world is £8.50.

BING CROSBY and the KRAFT MUSIC HALL – ICC 75th anniversary issue.

I still have a few copies of this acclaimed CD left and if you haven't got it, contact me soon.

CROSBY CALENDAR 2013

The 2013 calendar is now sold out (in the UK) and sadly it looks as though this will be our last as orders have dropped to an uneconomic level and costs have now become prohibitive. It's a pity but without a greater demand it is not worth continuing although I know the calendar gave a lot of pleasure to many. We are grateful to members who have given their support over the years and we thank Malcolm, Jim Reilly and the late Ron Bosley for their dedicated work in making so many attractive issues available to us.

THE LEEDS MEETING

The annual meeting at Leeds in October was a real success and you will read a detailed report from Bob Halls later in this issue. A brilliant programme and it was probably Malcolm's best ever production. Sunday October 6, 2013 is the date for your diary for the 48th meeting.

The compliments of the season to you all.

Michael Crampton **mdcrampton@gmail.com**

October 14, 1977

Various newspapers, radio stations and web sites duly noted the anniversary of Bing's passing. To select just one to highlight, I have picked out that by Richard Baker who made some good points in his posting on the Crosby Fan World site.

35 years have passed since the day on that golf course in Spain. Tony Meade, in his blog (http://bingsphotos.blogspot.co.uk/) reminds us of Bing's final words "That Was a Great Game of Golf Fellas" but our main memory must be of Bing as the singer of the century - the man who led the way.

In Gord Atkinson's radio tributes there are several instances where Bing denies the proposition of the interviewer that he led the way or formed the style. Recordings are then played of several other singers - all giants in their own right - Perry Como, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and others, all acknowledging their debt to Bing.

He denied it, but it cannot be denied that he laid the ground for a popular style of singing which was a major part of entertainment in the 20th Century: it might have drifted out of the mainstream of popularity now, but there are other younger singers filling the remaining niche - still following the style: when asked some seem to look primarily to Frank Sinatra as their model; but Frank himself certainly acknowledged his own debt to Bing.

The approach has become a little more aggressive - Frank and his direct followers attack the songs and mould them to their own shape, whilst Bing caressed them and bounced along with the rhythm, but the overall style and influence remains Bing's. He himself named others who influenced him: maybe they did, but there is a very clear discontinuity between their styles and the one which he introduced. No one listening to recordings of Al Jolson or others named by Bing from the 1920s could claim any great similarity in style and presentation.

Bing was a unique leader and we will remember him as such.

Richard Baker

A Great Bing Collector Gone

Having just received BING No.161, I was surprised and awakened from my lethargy upon learning of the death of my old friend Howard Levine. Howard was truly one of the giants of Crosby collectors.

I first met Howard in person around 1967, shortly after he'd left Decca and had begun working at MGM Records in New York City. I was still a teenager at the time, and I clearly remember visiting him at his office at MGM Records, where I was impressed by this man who had a turntable in his office to play records!

For the visit I had brought along a rare Bing record that Howard wanted to see... a one-sided 12-inch Paramount studio pressing of "Small Fry". Howard was impressed and wanted to buy the record on the spot, but I naturally declined his generous offers. The trip and visit were noteworthy in another respect, as the record got broken into pieces during the train ride back home. (It took me 30 years to find and obtain another copy of that particular record!)

Howard and I kept in touch by phone and letter for the next 40+ years, with records going back and forth, while he moved from North Bergen, New Jersey, to retirement in Florida, and an eventual move to Las Vegas.

Back in 2004, Howard finally and somewhat reluctantly agreed to let part of his Bing collection go. Knowing that I specialized in "non-commercial" Crosby records, with emphasis on movie-related records, Howard and I talked about some sound-track pressings that I needed to fill in gaps in my own collection. Then we spoke about some of the early "exploitation records",

made to advertise *The Big Broadcast* and *College Humor*, and other early Bing films, plus some of the "air-trailer" transcriptions for films like *Rhythm on the Range* and others, including a complete set of all 12 Universal Pictures discs containing the sound-track of *King of Jazz*. Then, during one of our conversations, Howard just said, "Why don't you just buy all of them and keep them together?"

This group consisted of about 70 records of all sizes, and once we had agreed upon a price I began to worry about how to safely get the records from Las Vegas to my home in Delaware.

I considered and quickly dismissed delivery by mail, fearing breakage or damage to records that might prove difficult or impossible to replace. Then, with a collector's fanatically driven logic, I decided that the only truly reliable method was for me to fly to Las Vegas to pick up the records in person. So, late in February, 2004, I flew to Las Vegas and spent several delightful hours visiting and chatting with Howard and his gracious wife, Marjorie. Howard had all the movie-related records ready for me, and I packed them into the special carrying boxes that I had brought with me to enable a relatively safe return trip.

Naturally, when speaking of Bing Crosby records, one thing segued to another, and we ended up discussing other things that I might want to add to my own Bing collection. Howard adamantly wanted to keep his collection of all of Bing's commercial recordings completely intact, but he suggested that I might want other non-commercial items that he had in the collection. Some of these records had been given to him by Jack Kapp, and others by Milt Gabler, for whom he had worked during his years with Decca Records. These included many original Decca test pressings (transfers of which he had already made available for the Jonzo CD series), as well as private or personal records and other material from Bing's Decca years.

By the time of my visit to Las Vegas in 2004, most of Howard's collection was packed away in countless boxes, filling several spaces in his home and in his garage. A number of subsequent telephone conversations took place as Howard located these records from among the many boxes, and read record details to me over the phone, including titles, matrix numbers and takes. These additional records were sent to me through the mails, for each shipment of which I sent Howard empty shipping boxes which he filled with the discs and returned to me. It was much easier this way.

Anyway, my trip to Howard's home ended with me juggling heavy boxes and heading back to the Las Vegas airport for the return trip home.

I shall always think most kindly of my friendship with Howard, who was one of the most astute and knowledgeable collectors I have ever met. And, I will smile and think of him whenever I play some of the wonderful Bing Crosby records that came to me as a result of Howard's gracious nature.

John Newton **e-mail: newtonjj2@aol.com**

The First Crooner: Bing Crosby

Michael Paul Lund of Serendipity Records presented "The First Crooner: Bing Crosby" at the Camden Public Library in Maine on August 23. Bing Crosby (1903-1977) was the singer "for whom the word 'crooner' was penned," according to Lund. His "music talk" covered the life and times of the first great popular singer of the American songbook. It also featured solos and duets of Crosby with Paul Whiteman and the Rhythm Boys, the Mills Brothers, Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Dinah Shore, Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden, Fred Astaire, and the last song Crosby sang 72 hours before his sudden death.

Michael Paul Lund has delivered illustrated music talks all over the United States, including libraries, schools, and historical societies. He has done radio commentary on stations coast to coast, including his two hour specials on WGBH-FM in Boston. He regularly writes music criticism for major record companies in the form of liner notes, that accompany classic compact disk re-issues by legendary performers. Recordings by Bing were made available at this event.

"Bing Crosby paved the way for every major vocalist who followed him," said Lund.

Wig has written to Mr. Lund and provided him with magazines, calendars and flyers about the ICC for use at his lectures.

The US Marine Band

On a whim, Judy Schmid decided to attend the free US Marine Band concert at the Civic Center in Syracuse on October 8th. She was delighted to discover that part of their concert was a wonderful tribute to Bing with baritone GySgt Kevin Bennear handling the vocals.

Founded in 1798 by an Act of Congress, "The President's Own" United States Marine Band is America's oldest continuously active professional musical organization. Today, "The President's Own" is celebrated for its role at the White House and its dynamic public performances. "The President's Own" encompasses the United States Marine Band, Marine Chamber Orchestra, and Marine Chamber Ensembles, and performs regularly at the White House and for more than 500 public performances across the nation each year. Keep watch for them coming to your area!

The Palladium – in Carmel, Indiana

The Center for the Performing Arts in Carmel, Indiana includes a 1600 seat theater called the Palladium

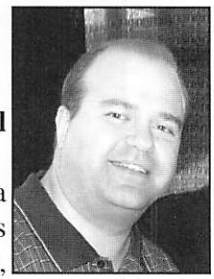
which was opened in January 2011. Michael Feinstein is the Artistic Director and he is also the prime mover in the Michael Feinstein Great American Songbook Initiative whose two-fold mission is to bring the music of the Great American Songbook to young people today and to preserve it for future generations.

As part of this, Heartland Truly Moving Pictures and the Michael Feinstein Great American Songbook Initiative have partnered for a new film series. The Great American Songbook Movie Series, presented by Printing Partners, which is bringing classic Award-winning movies to the big screen on the stage of the Palladium concert hall. The series launched on November 15 and fittingly it kicked off with a screening of *White Christmas*, with *The Sound of Music*, *An American in Paris* and an audience sing-a-long of *The Wizard of Oz* following over the next two days.

Michael Feinstein does a superb job in preserving our kind of music. His new book, 'The Gershwins and Me: A Personal History in Twelve Songs"' hit stores on October 16. From the excerpts seen, it looks to be very interesting indeed. The review on Amazon states:

> "From "Strike Up the Band" to "Love Is Here to Stay," each of the twelve chapters highlights one of the Gershwins' classic songs, exploring the brothers' lives, illuminating what the music meant to them, and telling the stories of how their iconic tunes came to life. Throughout the star-studded narrative, Feinstein unfolds the moving chronicle of his own life with the Gershwins, describing his vision for their enduring presence today."

Hofstra + 10



Greg Van Beek recalls a wonderful Crosby gathering.

Time, as it is wont to do, has a way of slipping by. Indeed, as Tennessee Williams so aptly put it, "Time is the longest distance between two places." In the case of the events of one November past, Shakespeare said it best: "Pleasure and action make the hours seem short."

Say the word "Hofstra", and to most long-time Crosby fans, no further explanation is necessary. They all know you're referring to the monumental three-day conference **BING! Crosby and American Culture**, which took place at the Hofstra Cultural Center on the campus of Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York on November 14, 15, 16, 2002.

Exactly ten years ago.

How can it be? It can't be ten years already. Where did the time go? Questions going through our minds, I'm sure, as we think back on the unprecedented whirlwind of events that seemed to happen at breakneck speed and make those three days morph into one. So much has happened since then. So much good for the Crosby community. And for Bing's legacy.

If there was a trifecta that triggered the renaissance Bing's memory and body of work has been currently enjoying, it can be traced back to January, 2001, and the release of (part one) of Gary Giddins' definitive biography ***Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams—The Early Years, 1903-1940***. Then came the Hofstra conference, followed by the events surrounding the centennial anniversary of Bing's birth in May, 2003, including the celebration marking the occasion at his alma mater, Gonzaga University, held that month.

The conference at Hofstra was first proposed in 1999. But it was no small undertaking. Serious planning for the actual event began nearly three years prior. Looking back through my own files and correspondence pertaining to it, I was first approached back in September, 2001. Just after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Even then, amongst all of the horror and tragedy, New Yorkers were looking to celebrate the impact America's most influential performer had on the nation's psyche for decades. Bing Crosby was America. The World War II G.I. who dubbed him "Uncle Sam without whiskers" was not far off the mark. His voice and presence had a calming effect then, and, apparently, still did.

Obviously, there were many talented people who were involved in the planning and execution of this event. But the real 'movers and shakers' were Conference Director Ruth Prigozy, a Professor of English and Film Studies at Hofstra, and Conference Coordinator Natalie Datlof, the Executive Director of the Hofstra Cultural Center. Many of our stalwart ICC members served as conference consultants, including Ken Barnes, Martin McQuade, George O'Reilly, Bob DeFlores, Arne Fogel, Will Friedwald, Gary Giddins, and our own American / Canadian representative, Wig Wiggins.

For the benefit of those who weren't in attendance, here's a brief, condensed outline of some of the presentation highlights of each day. My apologies to those names / panels inadvertently omitted due to space restrictions. Opening ceremonies took place on Thursday, November 14, 2002 at 10 a.m. In addition to Professor Prigozy and other Hofstra dignitaries, Kathryn Crosby, Ken Barnes, Buddy Bregman, Will Friedwald, Gary Giddins, and Nick Perito all added their own remarks. The rest of the day included a panel discussion on 'The Songwriters and Bing Crosby', with Linda Emmett (daughter of Irving Berlin), Rory Burke (daughter of Johnny Burke), Margaret Whiting, et al. The main panel discussions featured an interview with Buddy Bregman by Gary Giddins, and a tribute to the recently departed Rosemary Clooney, by Gabriel Ferrer, John Oddo, Margaret Whiting, Ken Barnes, Gary Giddins and Joe Bushkin, among others. Other panel discussion topics included 'Bing and American Catholicism', 'White Christmas: The Song', 'Bing Abroad: The United Kingdom and Australia' (with Ken Barnes, Joe Bushkin, Ken Crossland, Graham Pascoe, and Colin Stewart participating), 'Bing and World War

II', capped by 'An Evening of Crosby Films and Videos', with Bob DeFlores and Martin McQuade.

Friday, November 15, 2002 opened with the panel discussion 'Working With Bing', with Ruth Prigozy, Ken Barnes, Buddy Bregman, Skitch Henderson, and Nick Perito. Gary Giddins gave a presentation titled "Bing Crosby: Nothing Is What It Seems". Ken Barnes and Ava Astaire McKenzie offered a panel on 'Bing and Fred (Astaire)'. A panel on 'Radio Hosts and Bing Crosby' featured such luminaries as Rich Conaty, Jack Ellsworth, Arne Fogel, Jim Lowe, Gary Stevens, and Len Triola. The main panel, 'Remembering Bing Crosby', featured, among others, Bing's grandson Steven Crosby, Gabriel Ferrer, Mozelle Seger, George O'Reilly, Gord Atkinson, Bob DeFlores, and Buddy Bregman. Pre-Banquet events included 'Walking Down Memory Lane', with longtime WOR radio & TV personality Joe Franklin, and the opening of the exhibit "Crosbyana: Bing's Diversity on Display", featuring its guest curator, Martin McQuade. It was capped by a marvelous address and performance by Kathryn Crosby, promoting her then-new book "My Last Years With Bing". I had a ring side seat for this, and it was an absolute joy hearing Kathryn crooning some of Bing's most memorable tunes, accompanied by Nick Perito at the piano.

Kathryn Crosby sings a Bing favorite accompanied by Nick Perito.

The Friday night banquet was a swellegant, elegant affair, featuring the booming voice of Robert Merrill singing "America, The Beautiful", and the Dean of the New York Friars Club, Freddie Roman, as the Master of Ceremonies. I marveled at how a frail, 86 year-old Joe Bushkin was helped over to the piano, but once seated, the years seemed to melt away as he launched into his signature songs "Oh! Look at Me Now" and "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Town of Berlin". Margaret Whiting was the featured performer, and the evening was capped by Mrs. Crosby joining Margaret for an impromptu rendition of "White Christmas".

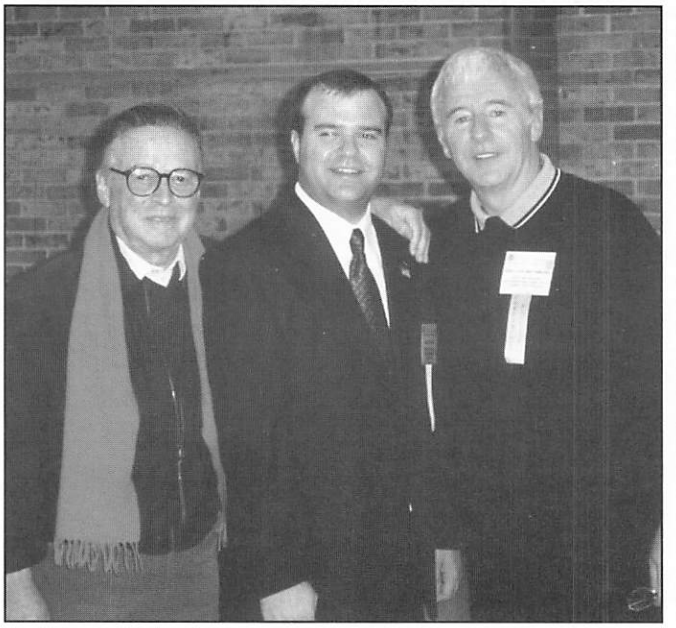
Saturday, November 16, 2002, the final day of the conference, began with two concurrent panels: 'Bing and Other Singers', featuring Ruth Prigozy discussing Dick Haymes, Will Friedwald discussing Tony Bennett, and Nick Perito discussing Perry Como. The other panel, 'Fans Speak of Bing', was moderated by our own F. B. Wiggins, and featured Australian member Ron Field, Sister Mary Francis Moore, Malcolm Macfarlane, and yours truly. The panel began at 8:30 a.m., and, having not reached the hotel room until about 2 a.m., it was a miracle I was able to get through my talk on Bing's final days with such little sleep!

'Fans Speak of Bing' with (l-r) Sister Mary Francis Moore, Greg, Ron Field, Malcolm Macfarlane and Wig Wiggins.

Other panels included 'The Collections', featuring Stephanie Plowman from Gonzaga University discussing The Crosby Collection held at that campus, a video presentation from Bob DeFlores titled 'Bob and Bing / Bing and Bob', moderated by Ken Barnes, a panel examining 'Bing The Actor', one on 'Bing and Jazz' with Buddy Bregman, Gary Giddins, Will Friedwald, et al.

Then came the highlight of the trip for me; sharing the stage with a dear friend for the lunch time panel 'An Interview with Nick Perito'. I had known Nick for about seven years prior to the Hofstra event, but this was the first, and sadly, only time we would meet face to face. It was a joy to be a part of the creative process with him, as we rehearsed our 'act' prior to the originally scheduled 12:45 start time. Going over the script I'd prepared, making cuts and adding things was old school to Nick. He had been through it so many times working on countless TV programs over the years. We were just about ready to head to the Student Center Theater for the presentation when I discovered, much to my horror, that our start time was changed at the last minute to 1 pm. That means we'd lose 15 minutes of what we'd already prepared! Nick was unphased. The days of live TV had

prepared him for such unexpected cuts. He simply said, "We'll just have to wing it and let them give us the hook", a reference to vaudeville days, when performers who ran too long would literally be pulled off stage with a giant hook from the wings. By the time everyone was seated and the introductions began, we were down to 20 minutes for what was originally scheduled to be a 45 minute presentation. Somehow we made it through, mostly with video clips filling the time. That was one of the only complaints I remember hearing about the Hofstra conference; scheduled start / stop times for the panel discussions and presentations weren't more strictly enforced.



Greg with Nick Perito (left) and Malcolm Macfarlane

Rounding out the itinerary for the final day was 'Bing and Louis (Armstrong)' with Will Friedwald, Joe Bushkin, Gary Giddins, et al, along with 'Bing and Frank (Sinatra)' with Charlie Pignone, Joe Bushkin, Richard Torres, and Bob DeFlores. 'The Irish Connection' featured George O'Reilly and Barry Stapleton, and 'Bing and The Girl Vocalists' featured Buddy Bregman, Richard Grudens, and Nicki Lee Barbour Foster (daughter of Peggy Lee). The final panel discussed 'Bing and Business' with Martin McQuade and Mozelle Seger (Bing's family accountant / friend).

What to make of it all, looking back on this amazing experience ten years later? It immediately becomes painfully clear how fortunate we were that the event was held when it was. Sadly, there are (too) many participants and attendees who have left us since then. Here are but ten of the main participants who are gone, but never forgotten, with the year of their passing in parentheses:

Robert Merrill (2004)
Gary Stevens (2004)
Joe Bushkin (2004)
Skitch Henderson (2005)
Nick Perito (2005)
Tony Toran (2006)
J. Roger Osterholm (2008)
Sister Mary Francis Moore, R.S.M. (2009)
Margaret Whiting (2011)
Mozelle Seger (2012)

I'm quite certain there are others that I've missed. We should be grateful that we had the opportunity to see them, to meet them, and to hear them share their memories of the man for whom this conference was dedicated. I cannot emphasize enough how wonderful it was to meet so many "Crosby people" in one place throughout the entire conference. I don't think I've ever shaken hands with so many people in my entire life! A lot of the time we'd meet in passing, either going to or from one of the panel discussions and share a few words. It truly felt like a big family reunion, and it was so great to be able to put a face to a name. To some extent, this was even more rewarding than the panels themselves.

As I wrote in my coverage of the event for the winter 2002-2003 issue of BINGANG; "The dates November 14, 15, & 16, 2002 are ones I will remember with great fondness for the rest of my life, for I've never experienced before anything like what transpired during those days, and I doubt I will ever witness anything like it again. The Hofstra conference on Bing Crosby was truly a lifetime event, and I am both proud and honored to say I was there and played a small part in it."

Greg Van Beek

(Editor: It really was a memorable and wonderful occasion. About 350 people registered for the event and many more came on a daily basis. The conference was described in depth in both BINGANG (winter 2002-03 edition) and BING #133 (spring 2003). Since then, a book called ***Going My Way: Bing Crosby and American Culture*** *has been published by the University of Rochester Press which contains many of the papers presented at Hofstra. It can still be obtained from Amazon for $39.95.)*

Monday, June 1st 1942

On Sunday, May 31, Bing is believed to have attended a cocktail party at Pat O'Brien's Brentwood home which was thrown for all those who were on the Hollywood Victory Caravan. Just after midnight, he was involved in car crash on Wilshire Boulevard at Roxbury Drive and received a cut lip and minor rib injuries. He was given first aid treatment at Beverly Hills Emergency Hospital and sent home. Despite this, he was in the Decca studios at 5505 Melrose in Hollywood on Monday, June 1st to record several songs in a session lasting from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Greg Van Beek has recently received some scans of documents produced for Los Angeles Local 47 of the

Musicians Mutual Protective Association which provide additional background information about the session. The Association covers the work of Orchestrators, Copyists, Proofreaders and Librarians.

The songs recorded were:

The Bombardier Song
Easter Parade
Be Careful, It's My Heart
Happy Holiday

Ted Duncan, who went on to be a busy arranger in the Hollywood film studios, had been employed to prepare the orchestrations for the session. The first song had already been arranged by Mr. Duncan for a *Kraft Music Hall* broadcast on the previous Thursday and Mr. Duncan's account shows that he had produced 21 pages for the musicians and was paid an extra $1 per page as the arrangements were now being used for a commercial recording.

For the next three songs Mr. Duncan billed a total of $147 being 14 pages for "Easter Parade", 16 pages for "Be Careful, It's My Heart" and 19 pages for "Happy Holiday" (which he describes as "Holiday Inn"), all at $3 per page.

Mr. Duncan's accounts are made out to Perry Botkin who was the contractor for the session and would have co-ordinated the event. There is also an account totalling $18.17 from a C. A. Crandall (or is it C.A.C. Randall?) addressed to John S. Trotter for 23 pages of orchestra parts and 3.5 pages for Piano (cued) for "copying Holiday Inn".

The Contractor's Report listed the nineteen musicians, all of whom received $30 for the three-hour session with the exception of Perry Botkin who received $60 as he was also the contractor. The Music Director was of course John Scott Trotter and the report confirms that four 10" discs were recorded. The personnel were:

John Scott Trotter (leader); Perry Botkin (guitar); Sam Freed, Gerald Joyce, Maxim Sobolewsky, Henry Castleton (violins); Eddie Ehlert, Andy Secrest, Charlie Green (trumpets); Elmer Smithers, Galen Gloyde, Kingsley Jackson (trombones); Jack Mayhew, Joe Krechter, Richard P. Clark, Morton Friedman (saxes); Fred Whiting (bass); Spike Jones (drums); Charles LaVere (piano).

The Music Maids & Hal were also present but are not listed.

It's interesting to note that Spike Jones was still working as a drummer with the Trotter combo even though he and his City Slickers already had a contract with RCA Victor by that time. Incidentally, Spike's daughter is Leslie Ann Jones, a multiple Grammy Award-winning recording engineer working as Director of Music Recording and Scoring at Skywalker Sound, a Lucasfilm, Ltd. company. She recorded some of Rosemary Clooney's sessions and your Editor had the pleasure of interviewing her last year in connection with the book about Rosie to be published next year by Oxford University Press.

Members will recall that Bing sounds as though he has a cold on the "Easter Parade" recording and when you listen to all the songs from the session one after the other a slight nasality is in evidence on all of them but is more apparent on "Easter Parade". Did he have a cold or was his singing affected by the injuries he suffered in the car crash earlier that morning?

Incidentally, "The Bombardier Song" was one of the last songs written by Rodgers & Hart. Fred Reynolds in his book "The Crosby Collection – 1926-1977" wondered if the date shown was the date when it was mastered for commercial release from a radio transcription but this was evidently not the case.

"Happy Holiday" was the last recording on which Bing was supported by the Music Maids although they remained with him on radio until October 1944.

So we have reached 11:30 a.m. on Monday, June 1st, 1942. Wonder what Bing did in the afternoon? Played 18 holes of golf?

Moving ahead two years we come to:

Bing in France – September 1944

Bing landed at Cherbourg in France on September 5, 1944 with his troupe of entertainers comprising comedian Joe DeRita, singer Jeannie Darrell (formerly one of the Music Maids), dancer Darlene Garner, guitarist Buck Harris, and Earl Baxter (accordion). They worked their way into Paris giving shows to the Armed Forces along the route. Later they followed the advancing army to Alsace-Lorraine giving many shows until returning to England on September 29. During the tour, they performed under any and all conditions, during bombings and artillery barrages, and in any kind of weather. The troupe averaged about three shows a day, each lasting about an hour and a half, and usually

including about eight songs from Bing. He finished off every day's work with a visit to a field hospital.

Over the years, we have been gradually piecing together more detailed information about the trip and we were recently contacted by Patricia Donatelli, daughter of the late Dr. Charles Donatelli.

Dr. Donatelli started his medical practice in 1939 in Buffalo, New York but with the outbreak of war he volunteered to join the army and became Captain Donatelli. He was with 'Company C' of the 48th. Armored Medical Battalion which went to Melun (28 miles south-south-east of Paris) on 3 September where they established a station hospital for the 3rd Replacement Depot. A Replacement Depot was, in simple terms, where a soldier separated from his unit by wounds or illness was sent. There was usually little chance of him returning to his unit and instead, he was posted to a replacement depot, a 'repple-depple' in Army slang. From the depot he would then be reassigned as needed to whatever unit had a shortfall in his particular military occupation specialty.

It was on September 8th when Bing and his troupe arrived at Melun which was near Villaroche Airport which itself had just become a USAAF Ninth Air Force combat airfield, designated as "A-55". There were therefore huge numbers of servicemen to be entertained in the area.

The show at Melun

Captain Donatelli wrote to his wife on September 8th. and we are reproducing the whole letter in order to set the scene and create the atmosphere of how it was to be in France at that time.

Dearest Peg,

Yesterday morning, during quite a rainfall and cold weather, I had to move all my things, in an open truck, to this next depot. Tramping in the mud and rain, with very little light, reminded me of the pictures of war, years ago. Never thought I would be in some of that mud, too, in 1944.

I wear enough clothes to keep me very warm, usually, but did not feel warm at anytime during the trip. Soon after the start, the rain ceased falling, and you could enjoy the French scenery as the convoy rolled along.

Soon after starting, we passed thru what used to be St. Lo. The city is surrounded by hills and cliffs of rock. In these, the Germans firmly set themselves, causing a great delay and casualties, earlier in the war. One night, three thousand of our bombers came over and leveled the city. Ruins of cities in the movies, or anywhere, couldn't be as desolate. Just about every wall was blasted and all the buildings merged into one mass of rubble. Soon after this raid, the Germans gave up that place and retreated down the road.

As you went on, the towns showed less effects of the war until later in the day you passed thru those cities and houses with glass in the windows.

II

The scenery was much as that thru the Middle West of the States. There is a vast change from England, making you feel more at home than it ever did. All along the roads the Frenchmen treated you like the conquering heroes. They threw us apples and pears, and brought cider to you, when the trucks stopped. Our men threw them parts of the K Rations and cigarettes, an item very scarce in France. Did your heart good to feel the people can be happy to see you after the damage done to their land and homes.

Along the roads, you saw the end results of our bombs on the German trucks and vehicles, parts of them were all along the side where they hadn't cleared them away yet.

If you could see the way our traffic moves on the roads, with no fear of the German planes, it would do your heart good. Shows we have complete control of this area. Never have seen a German plane, as yet.

Slept out last night, but am now comfortably settled in my pup tent. This is the first time I have used it in the nine months that I have lugged it around. Am set up in a large forest, reminding me of the days with Ward. This ground is soft and easy to sleep on.

III

Tis rumored that Bing Crosby is to be here this afternoon. You know he is touring the ETO and it isn't unusual for him to be in a place like this. If I am able to, I am going to take some pictures, and try to get him in it, to show you later. As you move around, there are more things to see and pictures to take. At present we are 150 miles from war front.

IV

Just went down to see Bing Crosby and his show. Took my camera with me and had quite a time taking pictures. There was a huge mob all around, and I thought I would get some closeups. I walked to the left side of the stage and got some good views, if they turn out OK.

Bing was dressed in G.I. clothes and looked much as he does on the screen, except that he is older and balder. He asked me to send him some of the pictures, showing you that being away from the camera makes him like anyone else. Also took some of the cast, a couple of girls and three men. I need to take care to keep the pictures safe, don't want to take a chance in losing them.

I am looking forward to the time when I can show them to you, when we are back together again. Know you will be more than interested in seeing them, recalling how you love Bing's singing.

Everything seems too peaceful in these woods, have a hard time believing the war is on. Just a few weeks ago, this may have been the place of some heavy fighting, while now it

looks like a holiday crowd on an Adirondack vacation (Look forward to one of those with you and Connie.)

Well dear, I hope that you are well and happy. I send you my love.

Charlie

Captain Charles Donatelli.

What an interesting letter! Bing entered into the task of entertaining the troops enthusiastically and Captain Donatelli, who was a keen photographer and used to develop his photos himself, did indeed take a number of pictures of the proceedings. As he mentioned in his letter, he had told Bing that he would send him copies of the photos he had taken and duly did so, resulting in a nice letter from Bing which we have produced on our back inside cover. Captain Donatelli's daughter has not been able to find all the photos but she has sent me those she has found and these are shown on the next page.

The group photo shows from left to right, Darlene Garner, Bing, Jeannie Darrell and Joe DeRita (who incidentally later became Curly Joe of The Three Stooges). The photo of Jeannie Darrell singing is included to give you an idea of the size of the crowd attending the performance.

When Captain Donatelli got back from the War, he started his medical practice in Toledo, Ohio, in January 1946 and continued until 1996. During his 50 years there, he calculated that he made over 20,000 house-calls. No one knows how many babies he must have delivered. For longtime friends, he traded medical care for services such as plumbing! He passed away in 2004 at the age of 89 and his daughter is undertaking the sad task of disposing of his effects.

The Crosby items include the photographs and letter we have reproduced plus the envelope containing Bing's letter and another photo showing Jeannie Darrell leaving the stage. There are some other negatives as well. Patricia Donatelli is seeking offers for the package and she can be contacted at patriciadonatelli@att.net

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series of CDs remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $18.00 US each which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $18.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £11 each.

1940s SONGS " R " US.
ENSA
ROY CHAPPELL-BETZEE-COLIN HILTON.
Playing and singing the songs of Bing Crosby
Anne Shelton-Glenn Miller-Vera Lynn-Al Jolson
and many more of your 40s favourites.
phone 0161 428 0037.

Roy Chappell, Cheadle, Cheshire, UK

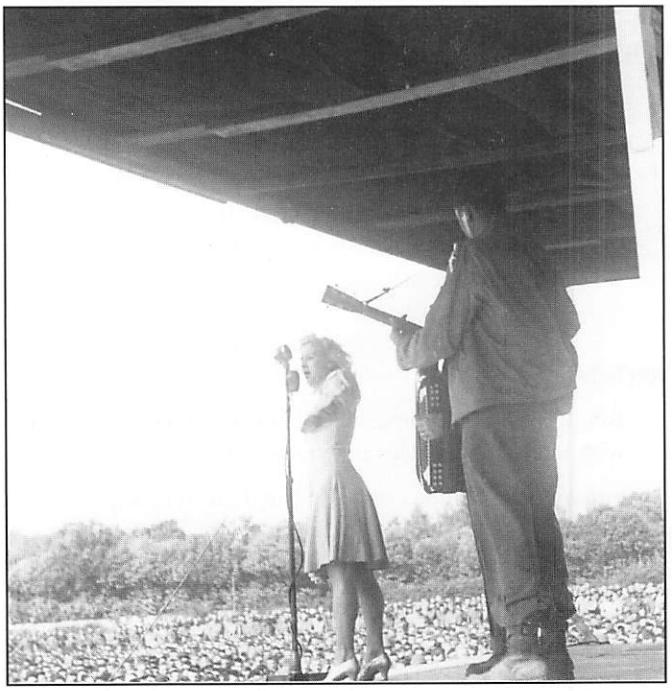
Your editor was pleased to meet up with Roy at the Leeds meeting and I was interested to learn that he is still busy singing songs in the style of Bing and Perry Como. Roy also sings as part of a presentation called **1940s Songs "R" Us**. I asked for further details and he gave me a card which I reproduce below. So if you are looking for a good nostalgic evening, give Roy a call. Incidentally, you can find Roy on YouTube singing some Crosby medleys.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has a supply of the book "Alternate Bing Crosby" by Colin Pugh which was published in 1988. Running to 159 pages, it gives details of the many alternate takes Bing made. If you would like a copy, send £3.50 to Michael Crampton. Europe and Ireland members should send £4.50. There are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances and Michael is offering these at the hugely discounted price of only £5.99 including postage. Also Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal figure.

Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull B93 8LP, UK (email:Ken54@blueyonder.co.uk – phone: 07711 172210)

Bing with (left to right) Darlene Garner, Jeannie Darrell and Joe DeRita at Melun in September 1944.



Jeannie Darrell performs for the servicemen.

Bing prepares to leave Melun in his jeep.

Ken would like to fill some of the gaps in his collection of Bing's 78s (UK issues only). Contact him for further information if you are looking to dispose of Bing 78s.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD and video. Festival Films has recently re-released "On the Road with Bing and Bob" with 3 added films and they have a new DVD called "Golf Mania". See *Keeping Track* for further details.

Gary Hamann. 2305 Park Ave #616, Detroit, MI 48201, USA (e-mail: GDHamann@Juno.Com)

Remember Gary Hamann who produced those excellent books of clippings about Bing and other artists? Well, he's been hard at work over the years and he's bringing out another book about Bing called "Bing Crosby 30s 'n' 40s" (though it has 20's material also). The book will be available late November.

Gary tells me:

"I've made it up of all new material. I'm going through line-by-line to make sure there is no duplication. I've avoided using the newspaper archives found online, including the ProQuest ones (there may be some overlap, however, because of the ubiquity of some newspaper columnists). There is a healthy dose of material from the Burton Historical Collection newspaper collection (Detroit Public Library) and Wayne State University's newspaper collections as well. It's $28.95 for BING readers. For U.S. orders shipping is $5 per 1-to-3 books, but European orders, it's $15.00 per 1-to-3 books Priority Mail. The covers are now illustrated and in color!"

Please make checks or Money Orders payable to G.D. Hamann. Probably the best way for payment for those outside the USA is through PayPal (contact Gary for details) or through an International Money Order from the Post Office. Contact Gary for a list of his other books.

McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640, USA (Orders only Tel: 800-253-2187, email: info@mcfarlandpub.com)

Members will recall that Ken Crossland and your Editor wrote an award-winning book called **"Perry Como-A Biography and Complete Career Record"** a year or two back. The book has now been released as a softcover and as an ebook. Cost $25. Print ISBN: 978-0-7864-7166-9, Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4766-0024-6. The book has 73 photos, discography, bibliography, index. 310pp. softcover (7 x 10). A Google search should find it easily but if not go to:

www.mcfarlandpub.com/book-2.php?id=978-0-7864-7166-9

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619 [Tues/Wed & Fridays: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. only],
email: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Free lists available by email. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing and other easy listening artists' CDs, please contact Ray.

Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA (phone: 1-800-742-6663) www.worldsrecords.com/

Try this company for CDs imported from the UK and elsewhere.

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: abcsoc@dodo.com)

The Society has been running for 35 years having originally been formed by the late Bob Machliss. Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights. The August film night featured *If I Had My Way* and *Rhythm on the Range* and in October *Riding High* was shown to tie in with the Spring Racing/Melbourne Cup Carnival. An Al Bowlly documentary completed the programme. The film night for December 3 will feature *White Christmas* and a Bing Christmas TV Special with Mary Martin, Andre Previn etc. A further film night is scheduled for February 18 when *Blue Skies* and "Rosemary Clooney - Singing at her Best" will be shown. The venue is the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com

This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains rare photos of Bing, radio shows, recordings and clips from Bing's films. The site has some superb material on it, particularly in the video and audio archives, and it is well worth devoting some time to it. Over recent months, many of Bing's Decca recordings have been added to the Bing Crosby Radio slot on the site and there are now nearly 2000 tracks streaming 24/7. Also Gord Atkinson's "Crosby Years" series can now be found in the audio archive.

Bing Crosby on Facebook

This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Daily entries are made and there is also a discussion facility. Over 68,000 people have "liked" the site which is very pleasing indeed.

YouTube

Bing Crosby Enterprises has its own channel at YouTube with many Bing videos in evidence. Go to:

http://www.youtube.com/user/BingCrosbyEnterprise

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material and Frans van der Kolff's incredible "Songography" and Keith Parkinson's magnificent "The A-Z of Bing's Movies" can be accessed. See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

A Bing Crosby Discography

Maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this excellent site can be found at:

http://tinyurl.com/BingCrosbyDiscography

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at: http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/

Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker. If you have any Bing news please consider making an entry on the site and if there are any Crosby matters you want to discuss, this is an ideal place to do so.

Jon Oye's Blog

ICC stalwart Jon has his own first-class blog with several pages about Bing showing many rare items from his collection. Go to: http://derbingle.blogspot.com/

Tony Meade's blog

Tony has an interesting and varied site at http://bingsphotos.blogspot.co.uk/

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698) website: www.intuneinternational.com)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent monthly periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, email: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club, c/o Roy Holmes, 18 Rutland Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 5QH, UK (phone: 020-8648-8858, website: www.highstreets.co.uk/kcc/index.shtml)

King Cole Comments is the club's newsletter and this is issued three times each year. For a free copy, please send a SAE to Roy Holmes.

Friends of Doris Day, c/o Dr. Sue Gökgör, 71 East Avenue, Oxford OX4 1XR, UK. email: suegokgor@aol.com.

Started in 1997, The Friends of Doris Day is an international Doris Day appreciation club based in Oxford, UK - and the only Doris Day fan club in the UK. The club publishes three 32 page magazines a year, packed full of articles and information you won't find anywhere else, including memorabilia signed by Doris herself for auction or sale.

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Justin Clarke, 21 Main Rd., Wetley Rocks, Stoke-On-Trent, ST9 0BH, UK (phone: 01782 551103 – website: www.nicolalockett.force9.co.uk/index.htm).

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (email: JWWehrman@aol.com - website: www.jolson.org)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com , website: www.flias.com/)

A magazine called *Laine Lines* is published three times a year.

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-899771, www.sinatramusicsociety.com/).

A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world. Ken Barnes, who made those great albums with Bing in the 70s, is the Honorary President.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 003531 8212418).

Meetings take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month in the Tara Towers Hotel, Dublin 4.

International Andy Williams Appreciation Society, c/o Penny Probert, 15 Bessels Way, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 2QG, UK (email: pat_woor@yahoo.co.uk - website: http://www.iawas.co.uk/)

The club has been running since 1967 and membership costs £8.50 (UK), 10 Euros (Europe) and $20 (USA). A quarterly newsletter of 12-14 pages is issued.

Books 'n' Bing

1. The Hollywood Canteen (where the great generation danced with the most beautiful girls in the world). By Lisa Mitchell and Bruce Torrence. Published by BearManor Media, 208pp. ISBN 978-1-59393-279-4. S22.95

Keith Parkinson takes a look at this new book.

Let's start by establishing the separate contributions by the two authors. Mitchell is a writer whose speciality is Hollywood's golden age. Torrence owns the photographic archive from which the illustrations are drawn. Those photos are as important as the text and tell the story of a time some seventy years ago when entertainment and the U. S. armed forces combined to create a patriotic front. There are over 160 decent sized photographs in the book. As for Lisa Mitchell, the book's blurb tells us that it is "meticulously researched". That claim is not strictly true, as we will discover shortly.

Members of the ICC will want to know how the book concerns Bing. Joan Leslie was an actress who helped at the Hollywood Canteen and in the book's preface she describes one of her lasting memories. It is of a "Christmas show when the Crosby Quartet sang carols that the boys requested". Perhaps Joan Leslie meant to refer to Bing plus his four sons – or maybe one of the lads was absent on that particular evening. There is a quote from the Bette Davis book "This 'n' That" which remembers a Christmas show when Bing sang carols with his young sons and "there was not a dry eye in the Canteen". There is a picture of Bing singing at the Hollywood Canteen but without family support or hair piece. We are accustomed to seeing a bald-headed Bing

entertaining troops. It is as though he shed his hairpiece and show business persona to become one of the guys to whom the servicemen could relate.

At the Hollywood Canteen sans toupee.

Before moving on to a more general review of the book, I'll mention the Crosby reference that is almost certainly inaccurate. The opening ceremony of the Canteen - located just off Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles - took place on Saturday, October 3rd, 1942. Bing is listed as attending that event when we know he was in San Francisco on that date.

For the general reader, the book relates the history of an institution which existed in the movie capitol from 1942 until 1945. Bette Davis and John Garfield were the two actors responsible for moving the idea forward having noted how the Stage Door Canteen in New York played a major role in providing rest and relaxation for U.S. troops on America's east coast. The west coast Canteen would draw on Hollywood celebrities for support. Film, recording and radio personalities would wait on, entertain and - in the case of the plentiful pool of Hollywood glamour girls - provide dance partners for the boys. Civilians and commissioned officers were not able to take part in the activities.

There is a chapter in the book devoted to the film *Hollywood Canteen*. Made by Warner Bros. in 1944 the film featured a few musical performances but no Bing. He had appeared in Paramount's nearest counterpart. That was *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942), where studio talent propped up a weak plot with brief appearances of varying musical merit.

So is this book for you? The Bing content is cursory. However, if you' are a movie buff with a combined interest in social history and World War II it has something to offer.

Keith Parkinson

2. Look, I Made a Hat, by Stephen Sondheim.

A Borzoi book published by Alfred A Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc., New York. November, 2011. 455 pages. $45. ISBN 978-0-307-59341-2.

Bob Achorn picks out an intriguing story from this relatively new book.

Stephen Sondheim of current Broadway fame and the Bing Crosby and Bob Hope team of earlier Hollywood stardom might not seem a perfect musical mix. But appearances can be deceiving.

Their active careers intersected only briefly. Crosby .and Hope scampered through seven Road films between 1940 and 1962. Sondheim provided the music, lyrics and general shape of 18 'stage musicals .from 1954 to the present. Crosby recorded 'Sondheim's biggest hit, "Send in the Clowns" in 1975 and 1976.

Beyond that, it seemed that their roads seldom crossed. But Sondheim tells a different story. If some had forgotten them, he had not.

In the 1950s, Crosby and Hope were at their popularity peak. In the first days of the 21st century, Sondheim remembered how much he appreciated them. He thought about trying to create a new musical based on a couple of fast-talking, rascally brothers, Wilson Mizner and Addison Mizner, perhaps a bit more sophisticated and less happy-go-lucky than the Road films, but still lively fun.

Born' in the in the 1880s, the Mizners were still hustling their way through life in the 1920s, and a bit beyond.'

In 1993, casting about for fresh material, Sondheim revealed his appreciation for the Crosby-Hope style. He suggested to his .scriptwriter, John Weidman, that they try a "jazzy and edgy" musical wrapped around the Mizner brothers. In his new book, "Look, I Made a Hat," Sondheim outlined the great possibilities.

"It occurred to us that the tone of the show might, be that of a 'Road' movie." This road show he "described an aimless cross-country musical, involving Hope and Bing Crosby," The Hope would be a bumbling patsy and the Crosby would be a suave, sly trickster. In their movie day, they played such roles, at least in the Road films.

And they did a lot of funny traveling from one end of the earth to another. The Mizners, a real life pair, sought success from Alaska to Florida, with way stations in between.

Sondheim observed that Hope was a popular

comedian and Crosby an even more popular crooner. Their films made money, lots of it.

Sondheim imagined: The show would be the story of Addison and Wilson, with a Hope-style character as the pushover and a Crosby type as the deceiver—a sharp fast, stylish musical about two rascals, both gifted, one fatally corrupt. Its title would be "The Road to Ruin."

In 1999 Sondheim began writing notes on his yellow pad, with the Crosby and Hope personalities and travels very much in his thinking. Soon his title changed to "Wise Guys." Early readings were promising. Development continued. Howard McGillin as Wilson Mizner played the Crosby-style character. Richard Kind played the Addison Mizner character, bringing memories of some of Hope's roles.

When Harold Prince came aboard as director, Prince declared the show needed more bounce. It needed sex. So a character named Nellie was introduced. Sondheim provided her with a love song, "The Best Thing That Ever Has Happened." The woman and the song were clear echoes of Dorothy Lamour's part in Crosby-Hope films.

Dorothy Lamour with her partners in crime.

By 2003, on stage in Chicago. Sondheim thought the first audiences were cool to "Bounce" as it had then been re-named. After two months, the reaction had improved. Still, Sondheim and his colleagues felt that serious problems had to be fixed. The Nellie role and song (a la Lamour) slowed down what was supposed to be a fast show in the old Crosby-Hope style. Out went Nellie and some of the frivolity.

"Bounce" was bounced. Sondheim and Weidman then went back to work, with a different director and somewhat different ambitions.

In the ultimate version, there was no Lamour role. The show may have seemed more introspective, focused a bit more seriously on the travels and travails of the Mizner brothers and less on the broad, lively comedy and music of Crosby and Hope—although Sondheim provided plenty of music. If Wilson Mizner's fast-talking, crooked style dominated the earlier script and score, there now seemed more attention to the developing character of Addison, winning attention as a Boca Raton architect. He sang "The Best Thing That Ever Has Happened" to a new male friend.

Wilson, the hustler, probably seemed less dominant. If the overall approach was less bouncy, it was intended as a more honest telling of the Mizner saga. Sondheim said he finally got the show he wanted.

Possibly this was at the expense of the original Crosby-Hope approach. But Sondheim didn't abandon the old Hollywood style; he renamed the musical "Road Show," the title he always thought it should have had.

That title maintained the long-ago relationship to Crosby and Hope and their roads. Perhaps today's audiences—or some of them—still retain memories of those earlier days. After a fairly brief New York run, "Road Show" closed. It awaits a revival in its final form some day.

Sondheim was not the first famous songwriter to be attracted by the Mizners. Irving Berlin knew the brothers in Florida in the 1920s. He suspected they could be subjects of a successful stage musical. In 1930, he wrote two songs for his proposed show. Then he set the idea aside.

By the 1950s, he was back at it. He wrote several more songs for the score. But somehow that effort again went nowhere.

At that point, Berlin, who supplied the songs for three major Crosby films, might have found a way to turn the Mizner material into a movie musical, with Crosby and Hope being pressed to tackle the roles. That didn't happen. But Bing and Bob could have been lively characters as the Mizners.

Bob Achorn

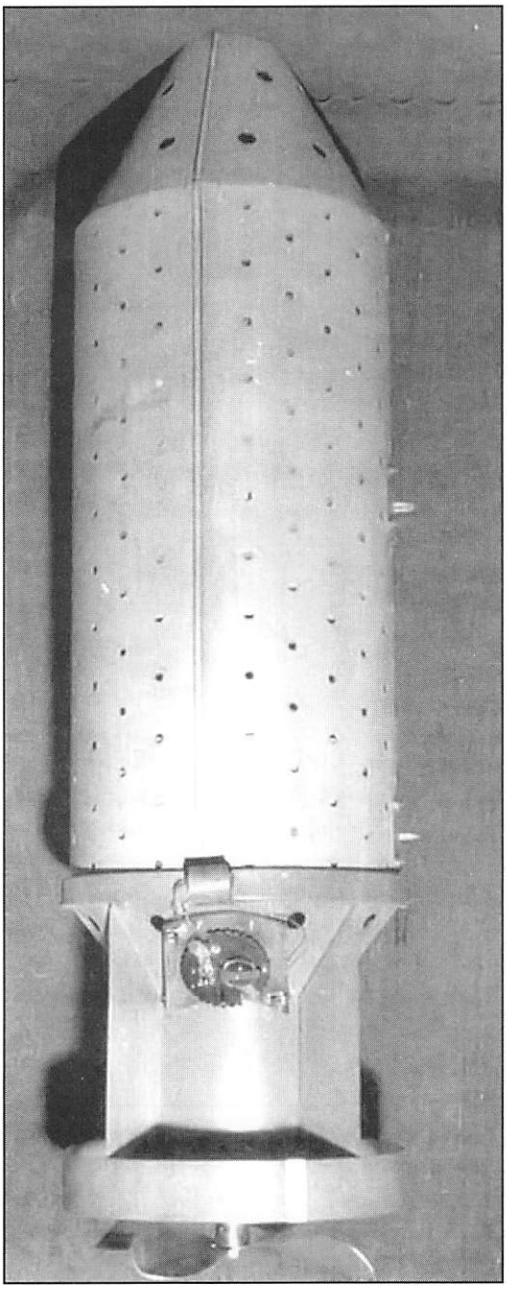
Memo from Martin

Martin McQuade continues to spot offbeat mentions of Bing.

Playing with Fire

Bat Bomb: World War Two's Other Secret Weapon by Jack Coufer (University of Texas Press, 1992) chronicles

a bizarre history, the attempt in 1944 by the War Department to devise an inflammatory device utilizing bats which, with explosives attached to their wings, would be released over Japanese cities with the hope that they nestle under the wooden eaves of Japanese structures, setting them ablaze upon remote detonation. Bing's involvement in this hare-brained scheme is discussed. Arrangements were made "with a small manufacturing and engineering company [in Del Mar, California] owned by Bing Crosby, the popular singing star, and his brother Larry to fabricate the bat bomb carrying shell" according to design. "The five-foot high sheet metal container, which superficially resembled an ordinary aerial bomb with its fins and cigar shape, would hold the compartmented cardboard egg-trays of bats with their attached incendiaries, along with environmental controls – cooler and heater – and a parachute with its deployment device."



The Bat Bomb canister

The Crosby engineers frequently conferred with the inventors. All to no avail: The "bat bomb" was usurped by a far more promising – and devastating - experiment, The Manhattan project. Further reportage on Bing's association with this enterprise may be found in *Einstein's Refrigerator: And Other Stories from the Flip Side of History* by Steve Silverman (Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2001); as well as in an article "A Batman to the Rescue," by Patrick Drumm and Christopher Ovre in the April 2011 issue of *Monitor on Psychology* (vol. 42, no. 4). The "Bat Bomb" story was also told on a recent episode of *Secret Weapon* aired on The Military Channel.

****

Speaking of *Batman*, a horrifying incident occurred in New York on Nov. 7, 1954 which bears an eerie resemblance to the Colorado movie theater shooting in July. George Metesky, known as "The Mad Bomber," left one of his crude, home made devices in the bottom cushion of a seat in the fifteenth row at Radio City Music Hall during an evening screening of *White Christmas*. The bomb exploded after the maniac left. The explosion was limited by the heavy upholstery, and only those in the immediate vicinity heard it. Among the capacity crowd of 6200 patrons, two women and two boys were injured. They were removed to the vast auditorium's first-aid room. Fifty startled customers who were seated nearby were moved to the rear of the theater. Amazingly, the movie resumed once the mayhem subsided. After the stage show the police cordoned off 150 seats to collect evidence. A story about Metesky's reign of terror, "The Quiet Man with a Quirk and a Quarrel." appeared in the April 4, 1957 issue of *Life Magazine*, soon after his capture in his hometown or Waterbury, Connecticut. A photo displays an uneasy calm in the lobby of The Music Hall in the wake of a distant close call in the real *Gotham City.*

Bing "On the Town"

A tantalizing tableau appears in *Burt Lancaster: An American Life* by Kate Buford (Knopf, 2000). During a wintry night in 1957 an exasperated Alexander Mackendrick shrieked "Cut!" while directing an elaborate shot involving Lancaster and Tony Curtis during the filming of his classic film *Sweet Smell of Success*, right outside Manhattan's "21" Club on Fifty-second Street. No wonder. Bing Crosby, felling no pain, had just exited the front door of the watering hole, smack dab into the middle of the scene. On the other hand, Screen writer Clifford Odets (*The Country Girl*) was hardly fazed by the commotion as he continued to type out dialogue in a nearby prop truck for the following scene. One wonders whether the cameraman defied the order, long enough to capture this most impromptu walk-on.

Another intriguing anecdote of Bing enjoying New York's nightlife is told in *Namath: A Biography* by Mark

Kriegel (Viking, 2004) In the late sixties the Jets quarterback opened a glorified sports bar named Bachelors 111 on the Upper East Side. "The place did a great tourist business, but even New Yorkers acted like tourists as they came in to ask, 'Joe here?' 'Joe around?' To the public, Joe did for Bachelors 111 what Frank [Sinatra] did for Jilly's." Namath's partner Bobby Van recalled, "We had the hottest place in town." The author relates the singer/dancer's account of one memorable night, circa 1968.

Bobby Van can remember getting a call from Jilly, who had gotten a call from Frank, who had gotten a call from someone with President Johnson. As Jilly explained it, the president's daughter Lynda Bird and her date would be in town. Bobby was to extend them every courtesy. "No problem," said Bobby, who gave them the big center booth. Everybody seemed to be having a good time. The place was packed. Bobby and Joe were drinking at the bar with Bing Crosby. ("I just wanted to see what all the fuss was about," Bing told them.) At some point, a Secret Service man pulled Bobby aside and asked if the two tables on either side of Lynda Bird's party could be moved. No problem, said Bobby, but then he looked at the tables. 'On second thought,' he said, "You'd better talk to Joe. He knows those guys better than I do."

The agent asked to have a word with Joe. Joe had no problem with the request until he, too, saw who was sitting at the tables. One was occupied by mobster Carmine Tramunti's main man, Tommy Tea Balls, and a wiseguy known as Angelo Cheesecake; the other belonged to Carmine "Junior" Persico, a fast-rising triggerman in the Colombo family. "Junior was a steady customer who closed the place many a night," says Van. "Never caused any problems."

Then again, Joe wasn't taking any chances. Now it was his turn to get cute. Finally, he told the agent: "I got no problem if you want them moved, but you're going to have to ask them yourself. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to finish my drink with Bing Crosby." Back at the bar, everybody had a good laugh. After all, the saloonkeepers had now accomplished what was previously thought impossible—offending the Establishment while having a cocktail with the venerable crooner. But looking back, Bobby Van considers that evening as a symbolic beginning of the pub's predicament: Bachelors' capacity for offense, and publicity, had put the establishment on law enforcement's radar.

Apparently the writing was on the wall. Broadway Joe would close his nightspot in 1969 and follow in Bing's footsteps as corporate spokesman for La-Z-Boy in 1972.

Filling in the Gaps

Often quoted are Bing's positions, as well as those of his colleagues, in the Quigley Publication's Motion Picture Herald's annual Top Ten Box-Office Poll. Bing debuted on this esteemed list at #7 in 1934, re-emerged at #4 in 1937, 1940, and 1943, and then ascended to #1 from 1944-1948. Bing dropped to #2 in 1949 (dethroned by Bob Hope), to #3 in 1950 and then to #5 in 1951. He bounced back to #4 in 1952, returned to #5 in 1953, and rounded out at #8 in 1954, his last year in the top tier. Less well known are the follow-up "next fifteen" rosters tallied by Quigley. The available data helps fill in some gaps in the record of Bing"s dominion at the box-office. He placed #12 in 1942, #13 in 1955, and then #20 in 1956.

Here are the Motion Picture Herald's "next fifteen" tallies for those years' "firmaments:"

1942
11) Dorothy Lamour
***12) Bing Crosby**
13) Tyrone Power
14) Walter Pidgeon
15) Bette Davis
16) Ann Sheridan
17) Errol Flynn
18) Wallace Beery
19) Judy Garland
20) Red Skelton
21) John Payne
22) Rita Hayworth
23) Lana Turner
24) Cary Grant
25) Humphrey Bogart

1955
11) Marilyn Monroe
12) Glenn Ford
***13) Bing Crosby**
14) Doris Day
15) Audie Murphy
16) Burt Lancaster
17) Alan Ladd
18) Jane Wyman
19) Susan Hayward
20) Jeff Chandler
21) Jane Russell
22) Randolph Scott
23) Robert Mitchum
24) Rock Hudson
25) Percy Kilbride & Marjorie Main

1956
11) Rock Hudson
12) Doris Day
13) Susan Hayward
14) Marlon Brando
15) June Allyson
16) Grace Kelly
17) Audie Murphy
18) Jeff Chandler
19) Gregory Peck
***20) Bing Crosby**
21) Yul Brynner
22) Ernest Borgnine

23) Jane Wyman
24) Randolph Scott
25) Alan Ladd

The rival Motion Picture Exhibitor's annual Laurel Awards separate polls of the top fifteen male and female stars further reflects Bing's sustained movie popularity. In 1957, Bing landed at the #7 spot, dropped to #10 in 1958, then to #12 in 1959 and 1960, ending at #15 in 1961, thus completing a 27 year graph of extraordinary screen success.

Martin McQuade

(Editor: Martin is also a singer and he regularly performs at the Greenhouse Cafe in Bay Ridge (7717 Third Ave.). He put on a show there on February 12 in honour of the 80th anniversary of Bing's debut at the Brooklyn Paramount. Here's what the press release said.)

This Sunday, February 12, 2012 is a special milestone in Brooklyn's pop-cultural history. It was on this date, 80 years ago in 1932, that Bing Crosby launched a 6 week engagement at The Brooklyn Paramount, still standing as the site of Long Island University.

This landmark event in Bing's meteoric rise to stardom will be celebrated on the exact anniversary, Sunday, Feb. 12 from 6:30 - 9:30, at The Greenhouse Cafe in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn (7717-Third Avenue).

The program will consist of songs made famous by Bing during those early years of his career. "The Battle of the Crooners" was waged at the fabled theater, so detours will be made to Bing's fellow travelers there, Russ Colombo and Rudy Vallee.

This was the original press copy for Bing's debut here. *Brooklyn's first chance to see him. He's hot - He's torrid. He's your favorite singer of romantic songs you love.*

So please join pianist Pete Sokolow and me for what will also be a perfect way to lead up to St. Valentine's Day.

Martin McQuade martinmcquade2002@yahoo.com

(Editor: Well done, Martin. Keep up the good work!)

Remembering Gary Crosby

In our last issue, we read about Bing appearing with Gary in Las Vegas and now Carolyn Schneider follows up with details of a project involving Gary that nearly came to fruition.

Bing's eldest son, my cousin Gary, was often described as arrogant, angry, and always looking for a fight. Over the years I saw that side of him at times, yet to me, he was my childhood playmate, a teenage friend and a comrade in our adult years.

Sometime in 1993, I called Gary to ask his opinion about a family get-together, a "Crosby Cousins Reunion". Also, I asked him if he was planning to make an electronic voice-over recording with his dad the way Natalie Cole had done with her deceased father. "I never thought of it," he said, "but not a bad idea, hey, thanks for suggesting it, honey."

The following year, Gary was working in television as well as touring with vocalist Bobbi Boyle (of the Pied Pipers) and the Guy Lombardo orchestra, his career was going strong. About that time he decided to try the electronic duet recording concept with Bing and picked out some tunes that would work well with both of their voices. The list included: "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby", "White Christmas", "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day", "Easter Parade", "Dinah", "Moonlight Becomes You".

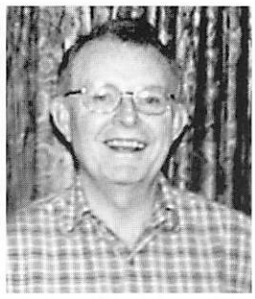
Gary and his Dad in the 1950s.

By this time I had organized the cousins' reunion and sent out invitations, requesting an RSVP. "Sure," came Gary's reply, "count me in." However, before the reunion was held, and prior to recording the songs with Uncle Bing, he was diagnosed with lung cancer. He had already survived triple by-pass heart surgery after almost killing himself with alcoholism. "Wouldn't you know it," he was quoted as saying, "I finally get myself together. I stopped drinking. I stopped smoking. I stopped fighting the fact that Bing Crosby was my father. And now look what's happened." He died two months later.

It seems that being the son or daughter of Bing Crosby shouldn't be such a tough life. Yet somehow for Gary, it was a demon that plagued him. I believe that he just wanted to be his own person, to be liked or loved for himself, not his lineage.

Carolyn Schneider artist71635@msn.com

Celluloid Crosby



Christmas is a three day television festival dedicated to the birth of Bing Crosby. In order to celebrate and commemorate the event, old Bing Crosby movies are screened... Appropriately enough, the most popular old Bing Crosby movie on television is called "White Christmas".
Willis Hall and Bob Monkhouse in "The A-Z of Television" (1971)

And little has changed in the intervening forty plus years. Around the time you are reading this the television listing magazines for the Christmas season will be jostling for space on the newsagents' shelves and *White Christmas* will once more find a home in the schedules.

The two main reasons for the film's longevity are Bing Crosby and Irving Berlin and the involvement of both goes further back than 7th September, 1953 when the movie went before the cameras. In Berlin's case a link to the film can be traced back some five years. In 1948 he was planning a stage musical for Walter Huston to be called "Stars on My Shoulder". The song "What Can You Do with a General" referred to Huston's character's retirement from the U.S. forces. Huston's death in 1950 put paid to the musical but Berlin was never one to discard material he had worked hard to create. He sold the plot outline to Paramount Pictures.

I'll briefly digress to recount an earlier Crosby-Huston link. In 1938 Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson were putting together their musical "Knickerbocker Holiday". They wanted to know how Huston sang so that they could tailor a song to suit his style. They wired him: "What is the range of your voice?" Huston said he had no range but that they could hear him that night (5th May, 1938) on Bing's Kraft Music Hall. Huston and the composers eventually teamed up, with Huston requesting that the score contained a love song. The

Danny Kaye saves Bing's life in *White Christmas* but hurts his leg in the process.

result was "September Song" which Huston proceeded to sing on the KMH on 1st June 1939. American Decca issued the two definitive interpretations of the song. Bing's waxing came a close second to Huston's original. Huston's plaintive "no range" vocal hits home every hearing, the more so the older one gets.

Back to Irving Berlin and his policy of never wasting his earlier efforts. Around 1950 he wrote a song called "Free" for the soon to be successful Broadway musical "Call Me Madam". During the show's out of town previews it became obvious that the song was not working in its context in the show. Berlin replaced it with "You're Just in Love", which became one of the hit songs from "Call Me Madam". "Free" was consigned to Berlin's bottom drawer for a couple of years only to be resurrected and given new lyrics. Now it was called "Snow". By this time Berlin had firm ideas as to how his film musical should progress. He had worked with writer Norman Krasna when "Stars on My Shoulder" was still thought to be a goer. When it became clear that the stage musical would have to be abandoned he outlined his *White Christmas* idea to Krasna.

Paramount's regular screenwriting team of Melvin Frank and Norman Panama were assigned to develop the project with Krasna. Neither the composer, the writers nor the film studio had doubts about Crosby's participation, although we shall see that this should not have been taken as read. The two female leads envisaged to play the Haynes Sisters for the movie were Ginger Rogers and Debbie Reynolds with Fred Astaire being first choice for the character of Phil Davis. Ginger and Debbie were eventually replaced by Rosemary Clooney and Vera Ellen. Astaire was less dispensable. He had already played the part of a singer and dancer in *Blue Skies.* When Astaire fell ill Paramount reacted quickly and signed Donald O'Connor as a replacement. He had already exhibited his singing and dancing skills in the box-office success of *Singin' in the Rain,* released the previous year. Then O'Connor fell ill and Danny Kaye was approached. He asked for a fee of $200,000 plus 10% of the film's gross. Paramount regarded this as an exorbitant demand and Kaye expected to be turned down. Then the studio accountants got to work and calculated the cost of delaying the film until O'Connor was fit. Kaye was signed. Some rewriting took place because Kaye lacked Astaire's and O'Connor's terpsichorean skills.

As for the two leading ladies, their film careers extended to only one more film each. Rosie's life after *White Christmas* will no doubt be well documented in the forthcoming Macfarlane-Crossland biography. Vera-Ellen waited until 1957 for her follow-up big screen appearance. This was in the British made *Let's Be Happy.* She spent the rest of her life living in Hollywood but out of the limelight. She became a recluse. The unhappiness stemmed from unsuccessful marriages and the death of her only child whilst still an infant. An American supermarket gossip magazine made great play of two photographs they obtained which depicted her as a pathetically thin and wrinkled woman. She was coerced to make comment and simply stated that she was retired and didn't need to work anymore. Yet it was clear that health problems were plaguing her. Arthritis, anorexia and high blood pressure had all been diagnosed but it was cancer which claimed her at the age of 61.

Berlin was continually conscious of the fact that circumstances had contrived to nudge him into contributing to a film when he had a greater fondness for stage musicals. Shortly after filming commenced he wrote to his friend, Irving Hoffman:

> "It is the first movie that I've been connected with since *Holiday Inn* that has the feel of a Broadway musical. Usually there's little enthusiasm once you get over the first week of the picture. But the charge in this set up has resulted in an excitement that I am sure will be reflected in the finished job."

Moving on to Bing's involvement in *White Christmas,* there seems to have been some doubt about his commitment to the film at the beginning of the year. A report by show business reporter Joe Hyams datelined 2nd January, 1953 stated:

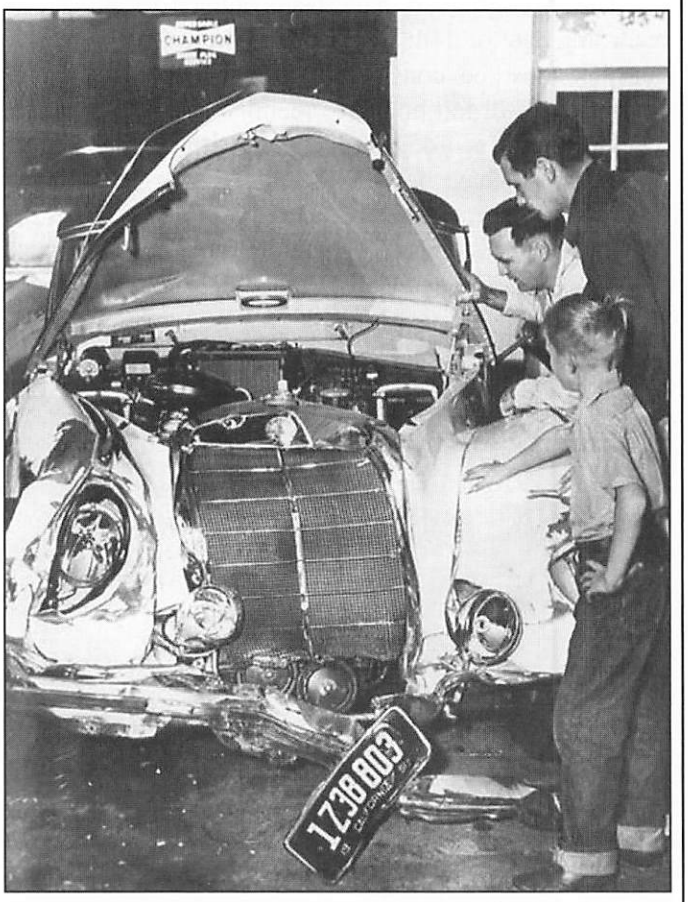
> "Bing Crosby won't make any more pictures until Sept. 53 when *Road to the Moon* starts. 'I'm tired and I want a rest', he told Paramount. Bing sails for Europe in March with his youngest son, Lindsay ... and will tour the continent at least two months. Bing's decision threw a monkey wrench into the studio's plans to produce *White Christmas,* co-starring Fred Astaire with Bing. Immediately after Bing stepped out of the picture, Fred asked for and got his release from Paramount. Paramount execs yesterday said plans are continuing for Robert Emmett Dolan to produce *Christmas* ... The picture rolls in March ..."

Some crossed lines here which indicate a mix of speculation and press releases. It would, however, explain why Astaire withdrew. And Bing's apparent coolness towards the project could well be explained by a follow-up piece from Hyams dated 22nd January which reported:

> "Bing Crosby's back in *White Christmas* ... Coincidentally - it has also been rewritten, which may be the reason for Der Bingle's change of heart."

It was September when the filming of *White Christmas* went before the cameras with an extended shooting schedule caused in part by Bing's involvement in a motoring accident in October. In mid-October he was reporting to Paramount with a cracked vertebrae taped up. The press made much of a collision in the early hours of 11th October on Wilshire Boulevard. Bing was returning to his home after taking actress Mona Freeman home. They had attended a dinner party given by film producer William Goetz. Brother Larry told the media that Bing had hurt his back but was in "a pretty good

condition". The other three parties injured in the collision were seeking a million dollar settlement. The case went to trial almost one year later, on 14th September, 1954. Before matters progressed beyond day one of the hearing an out of court settlement resulted in the plaintiffs receiving $100,000.



The damage to Bing's car after the accident.

Filming of *White Christmas* concluded at the end of November, 1953 and the film was ready for exhibition the following spring. Its theatrical life for the next half century plus began on 27th April, 1954. That was the date it was screened in New York at the prestigious Radio City Music Hall. Its opening day receipts set a record for the time of $25,000. Paramount speculated that its ultimate gross would be $17 million. Most of this would follow its nationwide release in North America starting in October. The film's seasonal box-office appeal on its first run would stretch until early 1955. Its British release began on 27th December, 1954. I saw it the following December at my village cinema. The Derby Cinema, Burscough Bridge (466 seats, prices 4d. to 11d., 3 programme changes weekly, one performance nightly at 7.40pm.) was well attended on the Friday night I viewed *White Christmas* on the 22ft screen. Several cinemas which played second run movies booked *White Christmas* as soon as its main circuit run had concluded. In Scotland cinemagoers in Wishaw could see it at the end of February, 1955 with the supporting film *No Rain at Timburi,* starring Carol Raye. If they missed it then the same cinema booked it for a further three days at the end of January, 1956 when it played with a short film demonstrating the superiority of Vista Vision. That was the Paramount film process introduced with *White Christmas.* The following year there was a shortage of film product available to the Odeon circuit following disputes with 20th Century-Fox. Revivals were used to plug the gap and *White Christmas* was given another Odeon circuit release in 1957.

Despite the comments made by Monkhouse and Hall at the start of this article, the best place to see *White Christmas* is at the cinema. Newly struck prints have been available for the last few years and the film has played one night bookings at several venues. The shoulder to shoulder experience of seeing the film with an appreciative audience on the big screen cannot be bettered. When you have scoured the TV listing magazines, check out if the film is showing at a cinema near you this December.

Keith Parkinson
k.parkinson1941@btinternet.com

"HI DIDDLE-DEE-DEE...."

'Bing – Through the Years, vol 10' contained the album of the 1955 'Christmas Sing with Bing' and it is perhaps appropriate for us to re-print the late Lionel Pairpoint's article from the winter, 2001 edition of BING when he looked at the entire series of these 'Christmas Sings'. Lionel had recently visited Hollywood...

Well, we finally hit the big time - Hollywood! A little too late to star with Shirley Temple in *Susannah of the Mounties* as had been my original intention although, to be perfectly frank, my experience in surviving wagon train massacres would have been rather limited, at that time.

Sad to say, there was no screen test waiting. I did rest a grubby trainer on the cement at Grauman's (I cannot bring myself to call it Mann's) Chinese Theatre and had the obligatory colour photograph taken (Why do modern cameras always depict me as slightly balding?) but I was depressed. The plaques in the sidewalks reflected scores of names that were unknown to me. I was haunted by the shades of Regis Toomey, Arleen Whelan, Kent Smith, Mary Beth Hughes and Paul Guilfoyle, bewailing conspicuous oversights. Don't tell me you've never heard of them. They were giants in those days.

I have, on occasions, hinted in these columns, of my own 'showbiz' background and at a recent gathering of the faithful at Leeds, someone was reckless enough to suggest that the theme demanded expansion. Alas, you have been nursing a practised impostor to your respective bosoms. It is true that I 'trod the boards' for more than twenty years but my every portrayal was a fraudulent pastiche of characters stolen from many hours spent ogling my idols of the silver screen.

An early characterisation for a Drama Festival was a ninety year-old, frock-coated, Canadian, necessitating blacking-out most of my teeth and adopting a bald wig (nowadays these devices might be considered superfluous). There was just one 'Land O' Goshen' in the script but I supplemented this with a couple more and a sprinkling of 'dadnabits' in a curious hybrid of Walter Brennan and George 'Gabby' Hayes. The Adjudicator was kind enough to comment, 'Quite theatrical but generally, unconvincing'.

With an amateur group, the roles rolled on - Policemen- 'Excuse me sir, is that your car outside?'; Doctors -'Nothing seriously wrong, Mrs. Brandywine, he'll be up and about in a few days'; Butlers -'Will you be requiring anything more before I retire, m 'lud?' The pattern was broken when a walk-on part as a bumbling European baron, drew spontaneous applause but it was only Nigel Bruce, playing Dr. Watson with a thick Teutonic accent.

The 'one-acter' as a chain-smoking, Moroccan drug-peddler sporting a fez and pebble glasses sprang from an improbable clone of Peter Lorre - 'Udderly widout scruple, carmpletely immoral but fess-scinating.' Elwood P. Dowd in 'Harvey' owed more than a little to the Jimmy Stewart original with overtones of Stan Laurel.

I remember the small glow of pride when complimented for my American accent, in spite of being upstaged by a young actress who constantly insisted on pronouncing Wichita as 'Witch-Eater' .

Then, a brief interlude with the androgynous inhabitants of Repertory - 'Dw-arling, did you see my 'Danny' in 'Night Must Fall'? Personally, I had grave doubts about seeing his 'Danny' in the cold light of day. And they all seemed to have names that were even more peculiar than my own. I can remember playing opposite a sloe-eyed temptress called, 'Celestine Puddifoot' and there was a 'Leopold Sirombo' - whatever happened to him? They'd all had parts in 'Z-Cars' or 'Emergency Ward 10' and the enduring memory from this period is the summing up of one of my performances, by a critic in a London newspaper who wrote, quite simply, 'Mister P's tie was an artistic solecism of the worst kind'.

A young family, the urgent requirement for a regular income and a fear of under-achieving ended my stairway to the stars but should you happen across a British movie entitled *Tread Softly* circa 1952, watch out for an exterior long shot of a callow youth seated at a small table with the star, a then middle-aged Frances Day. It might be somebody else you never heard of!

But now, for something completely Christmas.

There will be few among you who do not have, nestling in their collection, a copy of 'A Christmas Sing With Bing'. The sleeve notes reveal the following, 'When Bing Crosby raised his voice to lead CBS Radio's 1955 Christmas Show, he had no idea that he was initiating an event, eagerly anticipated, by millions.' In fact, there were seven more of these 'Christmas Chirps' as Bing was wont to christen them and in this premiere show, aided by whimsical comments from the ubiquitous Ken Carpenter, he carries the sole burden of introducing the tape-links, of singers and choirs from around the World, interspersed with carol and song from his own repertoire.

The discographers have been obliged to allocate a recording date of 24th December to these Crosby tracks but this must be considered unlikely. In those days, announcers still felt bound to identify broadcasts which had been pre-recorded and although the opening and closing credits have been edited from the original album, a piece in 'Variety' of 28th December describes it as an 'all-transcribed show'. The same journal goes on to say:

"Insurance Company of America laid out some $30,000 for this Christmas Eve 'Sing With Bing Hour' and that might be figured as cheap considering the promotion values. CBS toted up the statistics, claiming over 70,000 letters poured in for a 'What Christmas Means To Me Contest' for moppets with nothing but on the air advertising and no premiums or prizes save to a single winner. What happens to the other 69,999 kids who made with their letters is something else, perhaps they won't be snared into ever writing again or will compare the prize letter with one of their own and be disturbed about it. The winner was seven year-old Delores Short who had spent her whole life in Pine Ridge, Kentucky Children's Home. She read her letter. The Groaner promised her a bicycle, gifts for the other kids in the home and there was quite a bit of hoop-la regarding a B29 crew out of a USMF base in Alaska dropping the letter over the North Pole for Santa's mail bag. If there was an important Christmas carol left out by either Der Bingle or the pick- up points, it didn't come to mind. Crosby

breezed along in his well-known way with talk and chirp, some of it carried on with Ken Carpenter who gave a gentle ride to the insurance commercials. Fitting background emanated from the Paul Weston Orchestra and the Norman Luboff Choir."

Those of us who might relish some satisfaction from uncovering 'different takes' in the series are liable to be disappointed. The first six shows appear to have relied, almost entirely, on permutations from a master tape of around a dozen traditional carols plus 'White Christmas'. In retrospect the device is glaringly obvious but after an interval of 52 weeks, the average listener would not have been aware of the 'deception' or indeed, worried too much! 'Jingle Bells' and 'Joy to the World were regularly aired along with the certainty of 'White Christmas' and that traditional 'closer' for all of Crosby's radio shows at Christmas, which he called 'the best-known of all Christmas songs' - 'Silent Night'.

The second 'Sing', in 1956, called upon the services of Maurice Chevalier in Paris and Sarah Churchill in London, extending their compliments of the Season to Hollywood. Bing adds 'Adeste Fideles' to five of the carols he used last year and later, we are permitted to 'tiptoe' into the nursery of Miguel and Maria Ferrer, to hear their mother, Rosemary Clooney, singing 'Away in a Manger', by way of a lullaby.

Christmas of 1957 found Bing repeating six of the songs heard in the first two programmes, supplemented by his own versions of' Away in a Manger' and 'God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen' and as a secular alternative to the normally spiritual theme, his commercial version of 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' was inserted into the proceedings. In the same programme, Gary Crosby (still in army uniform, at that time) exchanged greetings with his father from Salzburg whilst introducing an Austrian choir singing 'Stille Nacht'.

Of the seven carols/songs used in the fourth of the 'Christmas Sing' series, in 1958, six had been heard at least twice, previously. The sole variation was provided by the first appearance of Kathryn Crosby who duetted with her husband on' Away in a Manger', dedicated to 'Tex', aka the four month-old Harry Lillis III who 'is listening at home to the radio, right now'! *(Editor: This version of "Away in a Manger" can be heard on "The Night Before Christmas – Single" available from Bing Crosby Enterprises)*

The writer knows precious little about the Christmas Eve 'Sing' of 1959, apart from the fact that the usual participants, i.e. Paul Weston's Orchestra and the Norman Luboff Choir were in attendance and that a new song was featured. 'It's Christmas' was repeated in the show of the following year but strangely enough, although recorded by others, it doesn't appear to have been used by Bing in any other context.

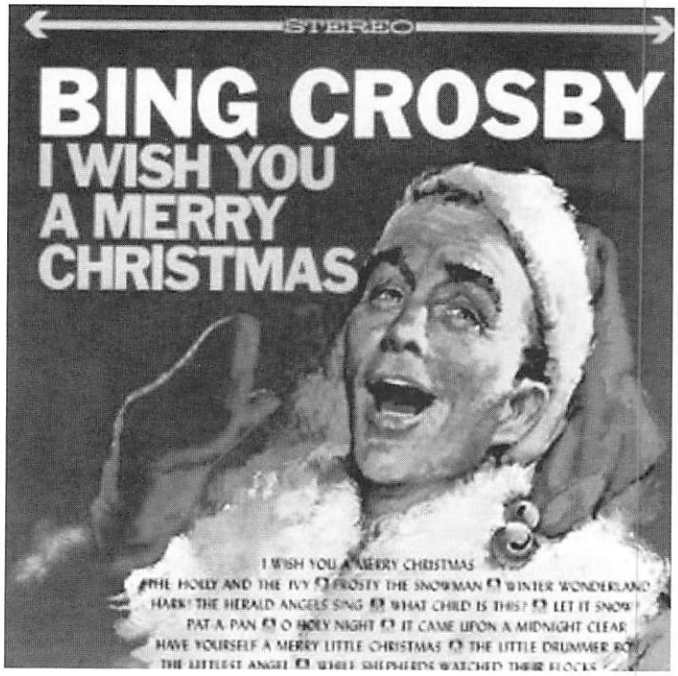
'Variety' of the 28th December 1960 welcomes a change from the usual 'Around The World' theme:

"This was the sixth 'Christmas Sing With Bing. and the Yuletide Eve special is well on its way to becoming an institution which is all for the best since Crosby has that special sense of hominess and belonging that adds an extra kind of warmth to a season when the Christmas song-fests tend to lose their individuality. The 'Sing with Bing.' remains something special, to look forward to each year. A change to format was offered this year, Crosby dropping the international flavour of season's past for a stay at home session with Rosemary Clooney, his regular CBS radio partner, her hubby Jose Ferrer and his own wife Kathryn as they swing, happily, through a wide category of Christmas songs from the newer pop standards right down to old-fashioned carols. The music was fine. Crosby and Miss Clooney were in top form and Miss Grant displayed a small but pretty voice. Ferrer added a reading of 'Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus' - the 1897 'New York Sun. editorial that was effective and overall the show had a fine sense of restrained gaiety. Two negatives however. One, was the fact that there was far too much talk and not enough music - at least in the first half of the show and Bill Morrow's rapid-fire dialogue tended to be a over cute. Second - Far too many commercials for Insurance Company of North America and pretty hard sell at that. 'Sing With Bing' being almost an institution it seems about time the commercial aspect of it be accorded appropriately similar treatment."

Mrs. Crosby might have well felt peeved when 'Variety' described her in the cast list as 'Cathy Grant' and although no one would be likely to disagree with 'too many commercials', the producers had every right to take exception to the phrase 'not enough music'. The critic must, surely, have had a heart of stone because, without including the monologue performed by Jose Ferrer and Kathryn or the regular sign-off of 'Silent Night', there were twelve songs, nine of which involved Bing. Naturally, a few of the previously recorded carols were featured plus a repeat of the 'Away in a Manger' duet from 1958 but there was also a rare medley of some of his Christmas pop hits with Rosemary Clooney consisting of, 'Santa Claus Is Coming to Town', 'Rudolph' and 'Here Comes Santa Claus' and a rendition of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' by the entire cast.

Kathryn Crosby, Edgar Bergen and Jo Stafford (subbing for flu victim Rosemary Clooney) comprised the guest list for the seventh of these programmes in 1961. Bing's version of 'Joy to the World', from the inaugural show and 'Jingle Bells', first heard on the second programme, had now become predictable 'regulars'. But Miss Clooney's indisposition may have been instrumental in favouring us with the bonus of another unusual duet with Jo Stafford of a medley similar to that used for the previous year but with 'Silver Bells' replacing 'Rudolph'. However, the red-nosed

caribou did get in on the act when Mr. & Mrs.Crosby performed their own interpretation of his anthem. A clip edited from a 1955 edition of radio's Edgar Bergen / Charlie McCarthy Show provided some unnecessary 'padding' and will now be of academic interest only, featuring nine year-old, Candice Bergen who eventually rose above the tag of 'Charlie McCarthy's sister'.



Bing's first solo LP of Christmas songs

Not surprisingly, the show of the following year reflects the content of his first solo LP of Christmas songs when Bing and/or guests, Kathryn, Rosemary Clooney and Johnny Mercer deal with eight of the fourteen titles on the recently completed album. Our genial host kicks off with the title song, 'I Wish You A Merry Christmas' and you will not be too surprised to hear an announcement during the closing credits which states, 'Some selections were from previously recorded master tapes'. The show is a good one. Rosemary handles 'The Littlest Angel' and 'Let It Snow' with aplomb and joins Mister Mercer for 'Santa Claus Is Coming to Town'. The songwriter fashions his own seasonal and typically inventive lyrics for 'The Glow Worm' -'...Light up the sky from Pole to Isthmus - Spell out His blessing "Merry Christmas" and finally, our old Yuletide campaigner joins them both for 'Winter Wonderland'.

All that remains is to wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Lionel Pairpoint

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

Greg Van Beek, by email from West Bend, Wisconsin, USA

Just received the new issue today and spent a good two hours reading it cover to cover. Excellent, as always, and was pleased to see so many interesting photos reproduced within. One photo, on Page 36, however, was identified as being Joe Venuti with Bing, when in fact, it was Rubinoff. He was a major violin star in the early 1930's on Eddie Cantor's Chase & Sanborn radio hour each Sunday night. He met up with Bing on the set of *She Loves Me Not* in 1934, and Paramount issued this publicity photo of the occasion. I'll scan the reverse side in a separate e-mail.

(Editor: Thanks, Greg, for pointing this out. Michael Feinstein and John Newton were others who were quick to spot this goof. Bing first met Rubinoff when he appeared at the Paramount in New York in 1931-32. Rubinoff led the orchestra at the theatre at that time.

In the last issue, we printed a review of the Sepia "Through the Years" series by James Fisher and we thought it might provoke a reaction. It did!)

"You'd better stick to singing" advises Rubinoff, famous violinist after hearing Bing Crosby try his hand at fiddling, at the Paramount studio during the filming of *She Loves Me Not*.

F. B. Wiggins, Arlington, Virginia, USA

As the American/Canadian representative of the ICC for the past twenty years, I do not normally respond to articles or letters in our BING magazine, as I do not think it is appropriate for me to do so.

However, the criticism in the summer issue by James Fisher of the "Bing Crosby: Through The Years" series of compact discs from Sepia Records should not go unanswered. The point I would like to make is that Mr. Fisher has completely misunderstood the purpose of the Sepia series, and its predecessor, "The Chronological Bing Crosby" on the Jonzo label.

The sole purpose of John McNicholas, producer of the 51 CDs in the Jonzo series, ably continued by Richard Tay, producer of the 10 Sepia CDs, was simple —but unique—to preserve in chronological order on compact disc the first three decades of Bing Crosby's recorded legacy for present and future generations— before it was irretrievably lost.

This remarkable project honors the most popular and influential vocalist of the 20th century in a manner that has never been done for any other singer. Rather than concentrating on "gold records", or "number one hits", or "best performances", the producers of the Jonzo/Sepia series have made every possible effort to include ALL of Bing's available recordings from the beginning in 1926 to the end of his exclusive Decca contract at the end of 1955 (plus a few "extra" Deccas from 1956-1958).

Good, bad and indifferent, every known version of every one of Bing's studio recordings has been digitally re-mastered, including alternate takes and unissued test pressings, for this series. And with the assistance of a worldwide network of Crosby collectors who provided hundreds of rare recordings, this extraordinary goal has, indeed, been accomplished. Many of these recordings would never have found their way to compact disc otherwise, as their current lack of "commercial value" has kept their original record companies from ever considering reissuing them.

As a collector of Bing's records for 70 years, I would be the first to admit that there are "lows"—as well as an incredible number of "highs"—in his recording career. In his review, Mr. Fisher has focused on some of Bing's less-than-sterling Decca recordings from the mid-fifties that are included in the Sepia series. No argument from me there—I certainly would never equate "The River" with "Some of These Days", or "The Song from Desiree" with "Pennies from Heaven". But the "quality" of individual songs, or of Bing's performances, is not what the Jonzo/Sepia series is all about.

The purpose of the Jonzo/Sepia series was not to be "...a contribution to restoring Crosby's predominance ..." or to "...enhance his reputation ..." (Mr. Fisher's words). Therefore, I hope that Mr. Fisher might be persuaded to reconsider his views given what this series has done to preserve such an important part of Bing's musical legacy that, otherwise, would never have happened in this digital age.

Full disclosure: I have been closely involved with the Jonzo/Sepia project. I have assisted John McNicholas and Richard Tay with the production of this unprecedented tribute to Bing, especially in the identification and acquisition of alternate takes and test pressings for the series. Also, I have been responsible for the private mail order distribution of the Jonzo and Sepia CDs to Crosby collectors in the United States and Canada. It has been my privilege to do so on Bing's behalf.

Lorne Harasen, by email from Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

Regarding Bing Crosby: Through the Years, Volumes One – Nine (1954–56). I note that James Fisher writes off Bing after the 1940s. It's too bad we didn't know sooner except that I and countless millions really don't need critics to tell us when we enjoy and when we shouldn't. To suggest that only die-hard fans can't or refuse to be critical is specious nonsense. All recording artists record a "klunker" from time to time and not all of that is their fault. As an example I refer to an album of country songs by Sammy Davis Jr. no less. Just try to imagine that one.

Bing used to say that one of his was the Beatles recording. Rather than commenting on the 40s, 50s or 60s let's refer to Bing's final recording, "Seasons", which was masterfully produced by Ken Barnes. Take any cut, "Autumn in New York", "On the Very First Day of the Year", "April Showers", all vintage Crosby. This recording came just after Crosby lost part of a lung surgically and had recovered from a frightening fall. I'm told that when he showed up at the studio dressed casually with a floppy hat and launched into the first number standing in front of a full orchestra everyone in the control room smiled at each other knowing that this was going to be a special experience with a special man. I guess I could also refer to that duet with David Bowie, "The Little Drummer Boy", which has become a Christmas classic and recorded around the same time.

I am also sorry that Fisher chose to bring up that domestic issue which was refuted and put away long ago by people who were there such as a son from that first marriage. It's time to stop grinding away at that one. I don't hear critics grinding away at that Sinatra rumor about his alleged contact with the mob. Put a sock on all of it. This negative stuff serves no constructive purpose. It is said that any fool can criticize, and many of them do. Opinions are like noses. Everyone has one.

****

I'm still around thanks to a very thorough personal physician and a loving wife. I still do a little broadcasting but only if it interests me. I can't remember

if I ever mentioned this before but on the Queen's last visit here a couple of years ago I walked Prince Phillip to the site of a proposed war memorial where we wanted him to turn first sod. On the way I asked him if it was true that an American tourist once asked him why they built Windsor Castle so close to the airport. He confirmed that indeed it was true! I really like both of them. I think the Queen has been terrific.

(Editor: So, some strong feelings! When I got Wig's letter, I duly emailed Professor Fisher and received a prompt and helpful reply.)

James Fisher, Professor and Head, Department of Theatre, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC 27402-6170, USA

Thank you for yours, which interests me a great deal. I certainly understand the "completist" and archival goals of the Sepia series, which I find admirable and necessary (I think I indicated this in my review, but I don't have a copy of it in front of me at the moment). I believe I also significantly praised Sepia and my own CD shelves are loaded with their titles, Crosby and otherwise.

As I presume came through in my review, I'm a huge fan of Crosby's 1920s-early 1940s work, but I feel something changed post-World War II—certainly, he was older, but it seemed to me he was not terribly discerning about what he sang and when he revisited his own early hits his performances seem to me to be lackluster. Clearly, he was popular with some listeners for his more relaxed later style, but for me—and that's all any review can be, a reflection of that critic's own tastes—his later work cannot equal his pre-WWII work. In fairness, it's hard to imagine that any singer could equal his pre-war achievements—hit after hit, great performances all!

I think for a listener buying a 10-disc set, it was necessary for me to make that listener aware that the tracks included mostly do not live up to his earlier work. If I were to suggest Crosby CDs to someone looking to be introduced to his work, the list would not include these. However, for the serious, knowledgeable fan of popular music, the addition of these 10-discs to their collections might be worth the expense—and certainly any serious popular music collection in a library would want every note Crosby recorded.

So, those are my thoughts. Thank you for including my review in your publication—I would love to have a copy if it's no trouble.

(Editor: Wig has indeed sent Professor Fisher a copy of the magazine and he will send him a copy of this issue too. And then a note came in praising Professor Fisher's article...)

Norman Wolfe, by email from Cumming, Georgia, USA

Spent last evening with the magazine and—apart from a proliferation of photos of the Editor—it was the usual interesting companion. I can't think anyone would object to a raise in dues. We certainly don't want the magazine to suffer in quality or reduce its publication schedule. For what it's worth, count me as a proponent.

The Ewing article was the best in the current edition (by far) and the Fisher article was next.

It must be apparent to you the best assessments come from writers who are not particular Crosby fans so they do not fawn and he generally fares well in their objectivity.

For that reason, plus the many articles and books cited and quoted, I think the concerns of our members about keeping the Crosby memory alive and preserving his rightful place in music etc: etc: are exaggerated. Fan clubs will disintegrate (there are few for Valentino anymore) and Crosby will fade into history—as all celebrities do—as Sinatra and Presley will do—but history, judging by articles such as Ewing's and Balliet's and others I came across while researching *Troubadour*, will judge him satisfactorily, and is, in fact, setting about that now.

He will be seen as the dominant and most influential figure in the popular music of the first half of the 20th century and one of the two dominant figures (Presley the other) for the entire century. Ewing himself comes to that conclusion and Ewing is part of a new breed of historians who weren't alive the first time Crosby sang "White Christmas".

I mostly agree with Ewing's observations. Certainly the sacrifice of aesthetic values for commercialization is evident but that is to be expected is it not? They were selling a product en masse. I don't know about Presley but if Crosby had wanted to be an aesthetic, he would have become a priest. There is nothing wrong with commercialism. If people didn't buy records, nobody would have ever heard of either one of them.

For that, and other reasons, I think Jack Kapp was a positive figure in Crosby's career, though there is little question he stripped him of the *joie de vivre* of the Brunswick and Columbia days. Suddenly, no humming, whistling or scatting. Good? Bad? I dunno; I sometimes thought he was singing about half as well as he could have.

Kapp was nowhere near the influence Col. Tom Parker was on Presley but he unquestionably broadened Crosby's appeal. True, he had Crosby sing a lot of junk; (Presley did too) but we also got Brahms and Victor Herbert and Stephen Foster.

Tell me another singer who would record "My Darling Nellie Gray," with its racial overtones, in the 1930s. He does and sings it superbly. If that was Kapp's doing I am impressed. It certainly wasn't juke box fare.

I disagree with Ewing's contention Crosby's common man persona squandered his distinctiveness. Crosby had far too much natural style for that to happen. Men of the 1930s not only tried to sing like him, they

talked like him, dressed like him and smoked pipes. Gary Crosby told me "If you asked any guy in America to get up and sing, he'd try to sound like my father."

Fisher is certainly correct about Crosby's peak period. He was a pre-war singer. After the war, with the exception of a handful of recordings, there is nothing distinctive, certainly nothing comparable to the pre-war period. He makes an interesting point about Crosby changing, not music. The voice was still there but he no longer knew how to use it so Como, Martin and Cole started using it. Perhaps he just didn't care. He had the additional problem of being forever compared to the greatest of all pop singers: the young Bing Crosby. He couldn't measure up. Know anybody who could?

A couple of closing observations: (I can hear you muttering: about time)

—-I liked Arthur Blood's little anecdote and the newspaper story about him prompted me to think of something about myself. Arthur was quoted as saying the best Crosby recording ever made was the one he was listening to now. My problem is I never can turn him on as background music when I am writing or reading a book. Even after all these years, if he is singing, I must stop and listen.

—-You were right about Lionel Pairpoint. It was good to read him again.

Keith Parkinson, Eccleston, St. Helens, Lancashire, UK.

BING 161 finds a few people taking gentle sideswipes at recent Sepia issues:

These recordings do not add much brightness to the enduring star it means to celebrate (James Fisher)

He [Bing] sang many novelty songs and he lost a clear direction (Alex Schicke)

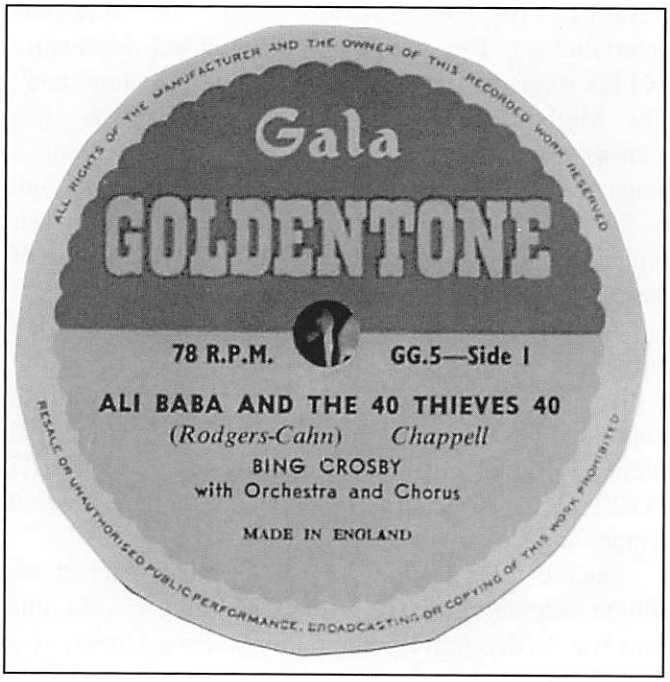
[Through the Years Vol 10] is not quite the treasure chest of individual titles that other releases have been (Ken Crossland)

I'm not able to disagree with the above but I can offer justification for the release of the series which took off where "The Chronological Bing Crosby" left off.

Firstly, John McNicholas ended his releases at the time when Bing lost his recording driving force: Jack Kapp died in March, 1949. Next, "second rate" Bing is still superior to a lot of what was coming out of the recording studios in the 1950s. Overriding all of that is a distinction that needs to be made about members of the ICC. They fall into two categories.'

(1) Those who contend that Bing's greatest years were the late 1930s or the 1940s and measure-all of Crosby's efforts against those golden years.

(2) The other category is that of the Crosby cornpletist. They buy everything Bing. Sepia would be lost without them. They will blushingly confess to owning (but not playing) "Join Bing and Sing Along". They will tell you that they have a copy of the Goldentone LP "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" which they bought because they thought the grandchildren would 'enjoy listening to it.


ALL RIGHTS OF THE MANUFACTURER AND THE OWNER OF THIS RECORDED WORK RESERVED
Gala
GOLDENTONE
78 R.P.M.
GG.5—Side I
ALI BABA AND THE 40 THIEVES 40
(Rodgers-Cahn) Chappell
BING CROSBY
with Orchestra and Chorus
MADE IN ENGLAND
RESALE OR UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE, BROADCASTING OR COPYING OF THIS WORK PROHIBITED

If pressed, they will produce a copy of the Twentieth Century-Fox album, "My Favourite Story" and tell you that the jokes may be weak but Bing's introductions are worth listening to every thirty years or so. And if they still cherish 78s, they will climb into the attic and bring down my all time hate "Seven Nights a Week". I'm not going to tell you which camp I belong to!

Graham Pascoe, by email from Bathurst, NSW, Australia

Once again, BING magazine No. 161 is a credit to all concerned with its production. There are so many interesting articles from various contributors. I'm not sure where to start with my reactions to them. Because several refer to Bing's movies I'll begin with them by presenting an Australian perspective.

Bing with the war orphans in *Here Comes the Groom*

Here Comes the Groom was first screened in

Australia in January 1952 and it was a hit with cinema-goers. (It's one of my favourites.) In Sydney, the Sunday Herald's reviewer wrote '...it is hilarious entertainment...Bing Crosby's cosy, relaxed personality and his songs fit very nicely into the Capra landscape'. The Melbourne Herald later thought it was 'fair comedy'. According to the Australian Club Crosby's magazine BINGANG, Bing had sent a cable to the Sun (a Sydney newspaper) asking that 500 Australian war orphans be his guests at a special afternoon screening of the film.

Another favourite of mine is *High Society* and it's not surprising that it should be chosen to launch a film festival. The Sun-Herald's film critic in Sydney was not impressed because '...for all its entertaining patches [it] seems lopsided'. Roberts Dunstan reviewed HIGH SOCIETY for Melbourne's Herald and thought it was a winner and Crosby was 'his relaxed self'.

Back in 1937 *Pennies from Heaven* had reached our shores. According to The Sydney Morning Herald, this film was '...delightfully entertaining...Bing Crosby is a decided success as the self-reliant and compassionate Larry Poole'. After it opened in Melbourne, The Herald told its readers that *Pennies from Heaven* was an entertaining trifle and that Bing's songs would please his admirers.

Keith Parkinson's contribution is very welcome and it was beaut to read his comments on *Sing You Sinners*. Unusually, it opened in Melbourne before Sydney. The Herald's review described it as an action comedy in which Bing 'rises suitably to the occasion'. Just after it opened in Sydney the film critic of The SMH described the film as 'jolly' and went to some trouble to explain Joe Beebe's so-called Australian system which consisted of betting on the horse who's name had the most 'i's and 'a's. *Sing You Sinners* and *Doctor Rhythm* both ran in 1938 and the former enjoyed the longer runs (in the same cinemas) in both cities.

In the previous year (1937) *Double or Nothing* came to Australia but the reviewer for The SMH thought that Bing's acting was 'growing steadily more stolid'. Later, when the film went to Melbourne the cinema's advertisements headlined not Bing but 'The world's newest sensation - the Sing Band'.

Australians could not see *The Road to Hong Kong* until 1963. The review in The Sun-Herald in Sydney was not kind and suggested that Bing and Bob should have stayed home. In Melbourne, Roberts Dunstan concluded '...we old-timers hanker for Bob and Bing with their old-time repartee'.

Keith Parkinson notes that in the USA the daily newspapers were always willing to print publicity supplied by the film studios. The same applied in Australia, not only with the dailies but also with various music magazines to the extent that some of their issues seemed like publicity vehicles for movies and little else.

You asked for readers' comments on James Fisher's review of the Sepia discs. It's inevitable that listening to a large number of a singer's recordings such as Bing's Sepias will result in mixed response, if only because the quality of the songs will vary as well as the artist's interpretations. I'm inclined to agree that, as a whole, these tracks 'are not Crosby's finest work'. I've just read Will Friedwald's *A Biographical Guide to the Great Jazz and Pop Singers* and he offers high praise for some of Bing's recordings in this period, notably, 'Autumn Leaves', 'Getting to Know You', 'Watermelon Weather' (with Peggy Lee) and 'Gone Fishin" (with Satchmo). To them I could add his superlative performances on 'In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening' (with Jane Wyman), 'The Isle of Innisfree' and 'Gigi'.

Greg's conversation with Peggy King was fascinating. What a delightful encounter was the one beginning with 'Pardon me, could you tell me where Mr Crosby is?'

My own research of Bing's place in Australian entertainment suggests that none of the radio adaptations of Bing's movies were broadcast here although one of our wireless magazines, ABC Weekly of 12 February 1949, did report that the radio version of *Welcome Stranger* changed the cause of the illness which struck down the schoolchildren.

I'm writing this on the anniversary of the death of Elvis Presley who, as the article by Ben Ewing noted, incited considerable controversy here, but not on racial grounds, just as Bing had decades earlier, in particular evidenced by correspondence in our print media in 1933, 1937 and 1939. Not all Aussies appreciated Bing's crooning.

It was interesting to read of Bing's assistance to Gary in Las Vegas. Bing didn't visit Australia, despite many efforts to convince him to do so, but Gary performed here with Louis Armstrong in 1956. Bing made a special promotional record which was sent to our radio stations to publicise their tour. The impresario's right hand man later wrote a book about the many shows and artists he brought to Australia and reported that Gary demanded top billing over Louis because Louis was a coloured performer. It was refused. Gary's appearances on the show were said to be 'pleasant and adequate. The audiences accepted him as a Crosby and were polite.'

Concluding this on a more pleasant note, Norman Wolfe's letter and its reference to a Crosby rose reminded me that the Bing Crosby rose found its way Down Under. A long-time Crosby fan, the late Shirley Naylor, had one in her garden.

John Newton, by email from Wilmington, Delaware, USA

A little more than a month ago, I was finally able to acquire an early and, I'd think, very rare inscribed 8 X 10 inch original photo of Bing. ... It is actually a portrait photo of Bing and Dixie Lee, and is inscribed by both of them.

The photo was formerly in the collection of the late Eric Anderson (I knew Eric for decades and also know the record collector and dealer who obtained some of Eric's collection after he died some time ago.)

The photo is the same photo that appears on the cover of Jonzo LP 12... except that the images are more clear and less "dark" than that which appears on the cover of Jonzo 12.

Bing's inscription (lower left corner of photo):

"For the lovely Lady who looks so lamentable when this lout is lilting. Bing to Lenore"

Dixie's inscription (lower right corner of photo):

"I guess it's O.K. for me to pass on my husband's autograph. O.K'd with Love, Dixie"

I would date this from late 1930 to early 1931, from the Cocoanut Grove days, and is interesting for a couple of reasons. First, Bing's inscription gives an early example of his affinity for alliteration, with all those "L's"... Additionally, it's apparent from the inscription that Lenore must have frequently seen Bing performing at the Grove... He was obviously familiar with her and how she looked, from his perspective, while he was singing.

One last thing that I found interesting. This is the very same photo/portrait of Bing that appears on the sheet music cover of "I Surrender, Dear". ... Dixie was cropped or blocked out of the photo for its use on the sheet music cover. ... It's difficult to see the comparison if you compare the photo on the cover of Jonzo 12 to the sheet music, partly because of how the reproduction on the Jonzo LP seems to have been "darkened". ... But when the original photo - or a copy of the original photo - is held next to the sheet music of "I Surrender, Dear", it becomes easy to see that it is exactly the same photograph. ... Every detail is exactly the same...

When the collector/dealer friend who had it first showed it to me, I knew I just had to have it!

Taking myself down memory lane, I recall a specific Bing-related anecdote from the beginning year or two of my collecting. I'd guess it was either 1965 or 1966, and I had just acquired a copy of Bing's Brunswick record of "She Reminds Me Of You". .. Of course, I think I was playing it over and over and over again, before coming down from my room for dinner. My father, who had an amazing memory that contained bits and pieces of every type of information, commented on the song and asked me to whom Bing had sung the song in the film? .. Now, way back then I had never seen *We're Not Dressing*. Those old Paramount films were never shown on television, at least not where I lived, so I tried an educated guess. Knowing that the female lead was Carole Lombard, my guess was Miss Lombard. My father just shook his head negatively. Trying again, I asked if it were Ethel Merman. "No, it wasn't Ethel Merman", was my father's quick response. Now frustrated, I asked about the only other female in the film... "No, not Gracie Allen", came the response.

My father must have seen the degree of confusion on my face, and he waited only a few short moments before telling me, "He sang it to a bear named Droopy." ... Still puzzled, I asked how he knew that bit of information. My father answered, in his matter-of-fact tone, "I saw the movie."

Not letting the issue drop, I asked when he saw the movie, to which came the ever-quick response, "When it came out." ... "Dad, that was over 30 years ago!", I blurted out in a questioning manner.

"Yes, that's about right.", he said, bringing the inquiry to a close. Dinner was ready.

My Dad also saw Bing in person, performing at the Carman Theatre in Philadelphia in 1932.

He said the line of people wanting to get in stretched around an entire city block! He thought Bing was wonderful in the 1930's, both in person and over the radio. ... He also saw Russ Columbo at the Earle Theatre, also in Philadelphia, and he thought Columbo was a pretty good singer, "... but not near as good as Bing."

Alan Matheson, by email from Vancouver, Canada.

...By the way, I am presenting a "History of the Big Bands" lecture series soon for seniors and naturally, Bing gets a look in via "Changes" and "My Kinda Love" (the latter being the Dorsey Bros. version). Regarding my other jazz history lectures, I do my best to get Bing in there but I have to say the number one example is the title tune from *Rhythm On The River*. I play the DVD version and everyone - young or older - is captivated by his artistry. What's interesting is that the older listeners who think they "know" Bing find out about the jazz singer (and drummer) that existed beneath whatever perceived persona they knew. The younger students these days may not have any connexion at all, even around the Christmas recordings, so fortunately, they

just like what they hear and see. I sure hope that BCE will issue somehow a full copy on DVD of the 1957 "Edsel" show. That programme really captured some of the best Bing in performance.
(Editor: Alan currently teaches trumpet and jazz piano at the University of British Columbia and teaches in the jazz studies programs at Vancouver Community College and Capilano College in North Vancouver.)

Pat Shields, by email from Universal City, California, USA

The 9/27 issue of *Rolling Stone* has a cover story/interview on Bob Dylan.

Interviewer: (Referring to Dylan's new album) "I also hear echoes of Bing Crosby, going all the way back to "Nashville Skyline." Does he bear influence for you?

Dylan: A lot of people would like to sing like Bing Crosby, but very few could match his phrasing or depth of tone. He's influenced every real singer whether they know it or not. I used to hear Bing Crosby as a kid and not really pay attention to him. But he got inside me nevertheless. Him and Nat King Cole were my father's favorite singers, and those records were played in our house.
(Editor: Martin McQuade and Roger Schore also spotted this item. Roger went on to say:
"Staying with contemporary performers, there's a new Randy Newman video on YouTube entitled "I'm Dreaming" clearly patterned after "White Christmas" although written, like many of Newman's songs, in a strongly satirical vein. Near the end of the song, Newman sings "Buh, Buh, Buh, Buh," clearly a Bing take-off. Parenthetically, Bing probably has the distinction of being the only major singer who not only recorded songs by Newman's illustrious uncles Alfred and Lionel, but who also recorded a song by Newman's father Irving, e.g. "Who Gave You The Roses?")

Dirk Schneider, by email from Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

A very interesting event has just happened.

All of you will probably remember, Carolyn spent many hours researching the story of her Uncle Bing Crosby's Levi denim tuxedo jacket for her book, "Bing: On the Road to Elko", that was given to him when he was Honorary Mayor of Elko, Nevada and the story that went with it. He and Bill Morrow were on a fishing trip in Canada for several weeks, (both were pretty grungy), so when they attempted to check into a top rated hotel in Vancouver, they were refused because the management thought they were a couple of bums. A bell boy recognized Bing as they were leaving and they were given rooms. (The complete history in Carolyn's book, "Bing: On the Road to Elko").

Because of her research and efforts over a three year period, Levi Strauss gave Carolyn the honor of being named "the expert", on the subject of the tuxedo, in a letter signed by the Levi historian. The original has yet to be found but 9 of the 12 duplicates that Levi made, (for promotional events), have been located by Carolyn. A couple of weeks ago, out of the blue, an elderly man contacted Carolyn to tell her that he had Bing's tuxedo jacket and he wanted her to have it.

Today, it arrived by FedEx, and it is one of the copies but in excellent condition, even the leather identification label and red handkerchief in the breast pocket. Carolyn is beside herself because we now have a copy of Bing's tuxedo jacket, (#10), to show at book signings. Just a little bright spot in our lives.

Ken Shaw, Hessle, North Humberside, UK

Once again I enjoyed a very good get-together in Leeds and meeting very good friends.

I am sure I speak for all in attendance in thanking you and Michael for all the hard work and time spent in the preparation to make the event such a success.

The presentation by Perry Huntoon on Bing and the working big bands was very well researched and appreciated. I would also have liked to hear more from Ron Field about the golfers and Pat Boone had time permitted, but no doubt we will be entertained in the future.

In saying how much I appeciate the time and effort you spend in making the meeting a success, I am also very much aware that we are becoming fewer in number. However I sincerely hope that we will be attending for some time to come.
(Editor: I'll drink to that!)

Jeremy Rose, by email from Cairanne, France.

Having deputised for Bob Halls as chronicler for the 2011 meeting when Bob was suddenly unable to attend at the last minute, it was with great relief that I settled into my chair this year with Bob safely installed at a table a couple of yards away, a sheaf of A4 paper in front of him and pen in hand!

The Leeds meeting has become a real highlight of my year, and after a slip-up a few years ago when a family gathering meant I was unable to attend, I am now confident that everybody I know knows that nothing is allowed to interfere with the first Sunday in October!

What can I say? Another great meeting. I know that there are various people around the world who do a huge amount of work on behalf of Bing's legacy, but with specific regard to the Leeds meeting, the ICC is very lucky indeed in having Malcolm and Michael, who do such a fantastic job in ensuring its continued success.

Highlights for me this year included the Bing/Maurice Chevalier extracts from the Oldsmobile show of 20th March 1961 courtesy of Greg van Beek, and a chance to see again Bing performing "The Men in My Little Girl's Life" from a Hollywood Palace show - thanks Malcolm!

The real pleasure, as always, is in renewing acquaintanceships with people I see for a few hours once a year and yet who all seem like old friends. Long may it continue.

The best line I heard all day, however, also put the whole event into a bit more perspective for me.

Ron Field took the floor to address the meeting on the results of his on-going efforts to prompt personal recollections of Bing from various celebrities who had known him. His throw-away opening line certainly made me pause for thought. He said, "I first met Bing in 1957..."

Hmm... In 1957, Bing had been in show-business for more than thirty years, I was a one-year-old and nearly 60 years after that we are still meeting to celebrate Bing's life and legacy. As I said above, long may it continue!

International Club Crosby 47th Annual Dinner/Meeting Sunday 7th October 2012

Bob Halls sends his comprehensive report on the proceedings of the Leeds meeting.

It was 9am Sunday morning as I started my journey from Suffolk to attend the 47th Annual Dinner/Meeting of the International Club Crosby in Leeds. A mass of fog greeted me as I opened the front door, closely followed by a twenty mile diversion off the A1 at Grantham due to over-running bridge works, the need as I enter my 60's to stop off to attend nature's ageing process at least twice throughout the journey and a five mile traffic jam on the Leeds Ring Road to accommodate a cycle race! So my planned arrival for a quiet light lunch with Jeremy Rose at 12.30pm became a frantic last minute burst into the Weetwood Hall grounds, with my temper fraying and my enthusiasm for taking notes of the meeting rather dulled!

However, the usual warm greetings were extended and Bing's gold plated melodic tones soon calmed my whole being, in the same way the voice had reassured and warmed me when I first heard him at the age of ten. Not only that, but Jeremy Rose, who had stepped in last year at the last minute to take the notes and compile the report after I had to cancel through illness, visibly sighed one big sigh of relief when I eventually walked in! Sorry Jeremy, apparently you were already sharpening your pencils and doing your wrist flexing exercises!

Welcome and Apologies

So to the business in hand! A welcome from Malcolm and Michael, our stalwart club leaders, who without them and their continued dedication to the I.C.C. we probably wouldn't even be there and a round of applause from the assembled gathering reinforcing the depth of gratitude, not just of those at the meeting, but all the I.C.C members who continue to enjoy the magazines and membership options the club provides year after year. Also those contributors from overseas, in particular Wig, David and Greg were thanked for their ongoing work for the club. A special mention was given to those members who keep returning from far off places, like Perry Huntoon from Chicago, Ron and Anita Field from Washington State, Jeremy Rose, plus Jason and Mrs. Liddiard from France. Others would love to have been with us, but unfortunately injury and other commitments won the day and we had to conduct the meeting without Charles Culley, who broke his leg, Michael Reynolds with a twisted back and John Walton and Colin Stewart, working and holidaying respectively.

Alas, there is always a downside! The unfortunate ageing process of those members and others associated with the crooning celebrities we love, many who sang with Crosby. The meeting stood in silence to remember I.C.C. members who have left us to sing with Bing, including of course **Andy Williams**, deceased just recently after a battle with cancer. There's more on Andy later, but it's a bit sad writing this report, surrounded by various prompt papers and documents, plus the last copy of the BING magazine. All my life I dreamed of being featured in a publication alongside names like Bing Crosby or Andy Williams, then suddenly, just for compiling an annual report, I found myself on the inside cover of the BING magazine, just down a few lines from Andy Williams, an honorary member of the club.

Message from Bing 1958

So after a few lines of 'Where the Blue of the Night', Malcolm played a 1958 recorded message from Bing for that year's meeting. This is a key area for those members like me, who were very young, or not even born when the club was in its infancy, allowing us to really feel part of the proceedings and to imagine that Bing is actually speaking to us individually.

An incredibly comprehensive recording followed, showing just how much Crosby felt towards his fans over here in the UK, with detailed accounts of recent activities, which included Bing singing 'All the Time' from the musical comedy *Oh Captain!* directed by Jose Ferrer.

He mentioned his trip to Las Vegas to see his brother Bob's daughter Cathy and watching the Carmen Basilio v Sugar Ray Robinson fight at a Reno Hotel. A photo of Bing was shown whilst he talked about his fishing camp experience, Bing up to his waist in a water holding up a freshly caught fish. He suggested we listen to the Mary Kaye Trio, 'A good act worth watching for' and he told us about his golf antics whilst visiting friends. Kathryn Crosby's nursing training was also featured, with Bing talking enthusiastically about her future qualification. (I'm not sure, but do I remember Kathryn, in one of her

books on Bing, suggesting that he was not quite as enthusiastic as he made out on this recording?)

Anyway, further promotion was given to **Rosemary Clooney**, again showing why she was, in later years so ready to come to Bing's defence when disparaging comments were made in son Gary's book, 'Going My Own Way'.

Bing also talked about possible future film projects, and talked favourably about a demo tape giving him his first introduction to **Michael Holliday**, who he would later meet in the UK.

He finished with a greeting to his UK fans 're-affirming my gratitude for your loyal adherence through the years' and mentioning members of the day. Don't you just love the man's vocabulary!

Bing's Hat

Now this is where I get a little excited! Why? Because a dream came true, followed by another one. Read on !!!!

Michael intervened at this point and stood up with a hat, just an ordinary old trilby, one I would never be seen dead in, just like Crosby's hats! But alas, not just any old hat, Bing's hat!, given to Frank Murphy by Kathryn at Hillsborough around 1978, passed on to Johnny Jones, then to Arthur Blood and Michael Crampton, all custodians of this personal item of Bing's. To my amazement and at the cost of a lump in the throat, I was asked to take on custodianship of the hat and retain it in Bing's memory until it passes to the next person, or is auctioned for a charity approved by the Crosby family if circumstances prevail. I have to tell you that the item is in good hands and I will travel personally anywhere in the world to see that those wishes are adhered to. I just thank my fellow I.C.C. friends for having this confidence in me. It is, without doubt, one of the greatest honours of my life to date.

Bob tries on Bing's hat.

If that wasn't all, my man of the meeting, George Patmore, also asked me if I would like one of the pipes owned by Bing, which was given by Alan Fisher, Bing's butler, when he came to Leeds some years ago and promised to send it to me. My first thought was for my father, who as a lifelong fan of Bing and now 86 years of age, and how he would react when he saw and held these items. At the time of writing this report I'm emotional just thinking of it. In a time of declining standards of courtesy and behaviour, isn't it amazing how one or two people can impact so wonderfully on your life!

Malcolm's Odds & Ends

Malcolm seems to be able to come up with an array of little extras each year and this was no exception. A video of the club meeting from 1990, celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the club was shown, with a cake proclaiming the 1950-1990 period. A very young Michael Crampton was featured prominently, with Leslie Gaylor at the top table. There were other exclamations from the floor, so I assume others present were comparing their looks of old with their present persona! All I can say is that whoever it was, including Michael, I call my fitness class attendees, 'The Forever Fit', so take heart, you are never too old!

Malcolm played a 1935 Walt Disney short of *Who Killed Cock Robin* and asked us if it was Crosby doing the whistling and boo-boo-boooing! Apparently there was controversy at the time, but Malcolm assured us it wasn't Bing! Whatever!!!!

A Fletcher Markle interview with Bing from 1966 was played, in which the interviewer poses the question 'Bing, how do you define happiness in your own terms?' Bing replies 'A happy family, and being part of a happy family. And being part of a family which produces children who are useful citizens. Money and fame are nothing compared to that.' Remember this was in 1966, well before Gary's damaging book. What can we make of Bing's reply in the light of what he had experienced with his first family? Perhaps a brave question from the interviewer and a solid response from Bing.

An amusing extract from an interview with Bing conducted by Gord Atkinson was also played and this was where Gord told Bing that the first time he ever heard one of his records "electronically" the song was "Whistling in the Wildwood". Bing could not recall the song and cast serious doubts about whether he had ever recorded it. The proof was then supplied with a photo of the record label and an extract from the song as well. *(Editor: Gord gives further details of this in his column later in this issue)*

But probably the most entertaining of this selection was Bing having a bad hair day at the recording studio, when amid a 1960 recording session, he had problems with the song 'Melancolie' and actually had to apologise to those present for his language.

It's worth doing a little 'what happened next' sequence

to this and it starts with Bing and the musicians trying to record the last song of the session and Bing being uncomfortable with the song and suggesting the band has a break while he rehearses. "Smoke up fellas, we're going to rehearse" he says. He can be heard exercising his voice with lots of Ba-ba-bas and boo-boo-boos, then drifting into silent oblivion. The first take is completed and Bing says 'go again' perhaps indicating he was not too happy with it. The second take is going well until the last stanza when Bing sings it wrongly and says "Whoop, help, everybody duck. Start again, I blew it." Take 3 is going well until the last stanza when Bing makes the same fluff and exclaims "God damn dirty rat bastard" (his words not mine). "Melancolie-e-e-e…Well I'll be a son of a bitch." Then he realises what he has said and says "Hope there's no ladies in the booth." Take 4 is an edit as Bing sings just the last half of the song which he had got wrong and he gets it right this time. Isn't it nice to know that even top celebrities have off days and react like we do occasionally!

We then witnessed part of a *Mastermind* programme from February 2012 featuring Malcolm Sumner, a teacher from Cheltenham, who answered questions and won that round on 'Bing Crosby'. Malcolm highlighted this, with the questions and answers in a previous BING magazine, so I won't itemise them here. However it was good to watch Mr. Sumner (who is now an ICC member) score 16 points on his knowledge of Bing.

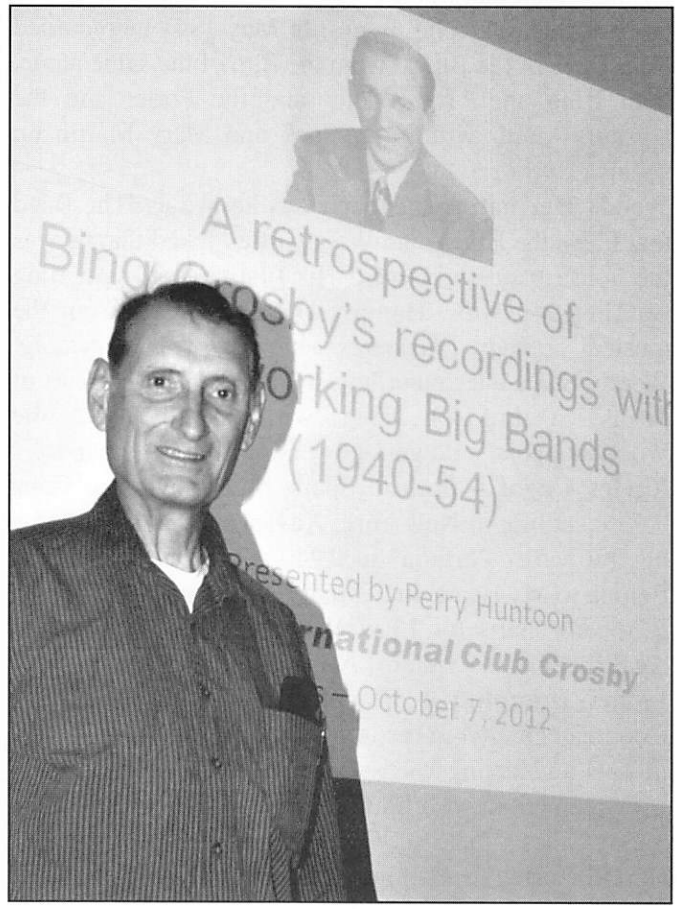
The Joe Franklin Show from 1976 featured another interview with Bing, this time with Kathryn present beside him. This was a particularly good interview by a man who really knew his subject and he managed to elicit some very enthusiastic responses from Bing, who often, when interviewed remains very calm and deliberate. Without going into greater detail, Bing was really excited talking about Sid Gary, the master of double-talk, and about Russ Columbo and the so called 'Battle of the Baritones'. "Carole Lombard was crazy about Russ," Bing said, and in response to the Boo-boo-boo things associated with Bing, he replied "Oh I just stuck in a couple of boo-boo-boos when I didn't know the words." Bing was then shown an album sleeve and proceeded to sing the opening words to every song on the album off the top of his head! He really was in good form in this interview and nicely supported by a very attractive Kathryn.

If you have access to the Internet, just go to 'You Tube' and enter Bing Crosby and a whole host of these interviews, film clips, songs and even old 1950's 'What's My Line' programmes are there for the taking. It's so easy, just press the button and up comes Bing. Even I can do it!

Finally in this section we watched Bing and Bob at the Waldorf Astoria in 1970. Aspiring celebrities would do well to view this clip and see how real consummate professionals do it properly. As was customary, the old duo went through a host of songs and verbal exchanges at breakneck speed, with no sign of age wearying them! I found it difficult to know when Bob Hope (who was renowned for having to have his words displayed as prompts) was sticking to the script or not. But then I suppose many film directors had the same problem, Bob shouting on one occasion, words to the effect, 'if you recognize any of your own lines just yell Bingo.'

Crosby and the Working Bands. Presentation by Perry Huntoon.

Well, what can one say about Perry! A walking encyclopaedia perhaps? Is there anything this fantastic American doesn't know about the big bands and singers of the Swing Era?



Perry starts his presentation.

This I think was his third presentation to the meeting and it all flowed off the top of his head without a pause, and I tell you, even if you were not interested in this style of music, you would be after listening to Perry and watching Malcolm's accompanying slide show! My biggest problem was to get it all down in my notes, names and song titles coming at me from all directions! Thankfully he gave me a page of notes to refer to, so here goes!

Perry wanted to dwell on some of the working bands which were on the road all year round, rather than the big recording bands like the Dorseys. The following features those who Bing collaborated with over the years and the songs highlighted were all played in their

entirety.

Bob Crosby – Perry explained that the former members of Ben Pollack's band wanted a good front man and they elected Bob as their titular leader and Bob Crosby and his Orchestra came into being. Bob and Bing recorded many songs together and we heard the crossover pop version of 'It Makes No Difference Now' from December 1940 as an example.

Jack Teagarden – Jack had an exclusive contract to play for the Paul Whiteman Orchestra from 1933 to 1938. The contract with Whiteman's band provided him with financial security but prevented him from playing an active part in the musical advances of the mid-thirties swing era. He formed his own band, but he was a poor businessman and didn't enjoy much success, partly perhaps due to alcohol issues. In May 1941 he recorded 'The Birth of the Blues' from the film of the same name, with Bing and 'The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid' with Bing, Jack and Mary Martin on vocals.

Woody Herman – This band was known as 'The Band that Plays the Blues' and Woody often joked that he was the house band for Decca! His first session with Bing was in 1941 with 'Humpty Dumpty Heart' from the musical comedy *Playmates,* starring John Barrymore. Woody had a later recording with 'Deep in the Heart of Texas' a hit for Bing with Woody and the Woodchoppers, a downsized version of his big band.

Xavier Cugat – Born in Spain, then moving to Cuba before settling in New York, Xavier and his band had a big hit with 'Perfidia' in 1940. Bing recorded 'You Belong to My Heart' in February 1945 and this made the Billboard charts for 14 weeks. Cugat was the resident bandleader at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel for 16 years.

Lionel Hampton – Hampton was with the Benny Goodman Quartet in the late 30's, forming his own band in 1941 and having a sensational hit with 'Flying Home'. Bing teamed up with him in January 1946 with 'On the Sunny Side of the Street'. Perry explained that this was an odd pairing as Hampton had a very exuberant band, not much in keeping with Bing's laid back style.

Russ Morgan – A sweet band according to Perry. Russ had a career lasting until his death in 1969, with the band continuing into the new millennium led by Russ's son, Jack Morgan. Russ came to fame as musical director of the radio station WXYZ in Detroit and hosted a very popular programme. One of his collaborations with Bing was in 1946 when they recorded 'Does Your Heart Beat for Me'.

Guy Lombardo – Bing and Guy were Decca's largest sellers and it is odd, explained Perry, that the label never paired them up except for just one session, recording '(Oh! Baby Mine) I Get So Lonely' in January 1954. Perhaps the main reason was that the Lombardo band was based in New York City, with Bing primarily being on the West Coast.

Les Brown – Les Brown and the Band of Renown only had one pairing with Bing in June 1954, which was a shame. Perry pointed out that because of the gentle swing of the band, they matched Bing's singing style very closely. He felt that they should have been paired on an album of standards from the Great American Songbook. The song featured was 'She Is the Sunshine of Virginia' which dated back to 1916. A photo was displayed on screen of Les Brown's gravestone, inscribed 'Les Brown a Man of Renown 1912-2001'.

Andy Williams Tribute by Bob Halls

For the reasons now highlighted, I had asked Malcolm if I could do a brief tribute to Andy Williams; however I didn't expect to have to follow Perry Huntoon! How do you follow that? - was the question in my mind as I stood up. Thankfully for me, was that, at least, I would be able to give my writing hand a rest!

I tried to explain to the meeting that I came from a slightly different era to many of those present and that my love of Bing came from feelings experienced second hand. I had no real opportunity of hearing or seeing Bing in his heyday and only heard him via 78rpm records passed down from my father. But the reassuring warmth in childhood of Bing's voice was a tangible thing for a vulnerable and not particularly confident young boy and so began my admiration of him and his music and in some respects reliance on him at challenging times of my life. Andy Williams had the same effect, especially at Christmas and his weekly and annual seasonal shows were a highlight in my early years.

Not only that, but one of the first records to come my way at the age of about ten, was 'Swinging on a Star' featuring Bing, plus the Williams Brothers and a 16 year old Andy. I followed his music for years and finally saw him live in Ipswich in 2005. He came on stage, no support act, just him, for two hours! At the age of 77 years his voice still held up, the top notes clear and powerful and I was mesmerised!

I read excerpts from Andy's autobiography 'Moon River and Me' to the meeting and paid special attention to two parts, one about how Bing was so encouraging during 'Swinging on a Star' and one of Andy's proudest moments, having Bing on his show and singing a duet with him. 'Bing was in an entirely different league, the first and greatest singing star of the modern era and the man who paved the way for all the singers, like me, who followed him' said Andy.

Malcolm had put together a little slide show of Bing and Andy together on the show mentioned and also some accompanying photos. I finished my little presentation with these words. "God bless the memory of Bing Crosby, and Andy Williams, may they rest in peace."

The Auction

Malcolm then auctioned a variety of items donated for the purpose of raising funds for the ICC, including a glass paperweight, a Bing tie, a rather nice Bing

wristwatch, a pine Bing related plaque with 'Crosby Corner' thereon and mentioned various other Bing memorabilia and records, including a selection of Bing/Roy Chappell records for £1 each and finally from my own camp, a pencil drawing of Bing from an old publicity photo by my own 17 year old step-daughter, Candice Tolton who is in the middle of an art, design and photography course. The reason for mentioning this however is to put things in perspective when other people have no idea who Bing Crosby was! "Yes I'll draw him for you Bob, what did you say his name was, Bing Crowsbury?"

Which is not that surprising when one considers the headline in a newspaper reporting Bing's first marriage. "Dixie Lee marries Bing Croveny"!!!!!!

Candice's drawing.

Greg Van Beek's DVD

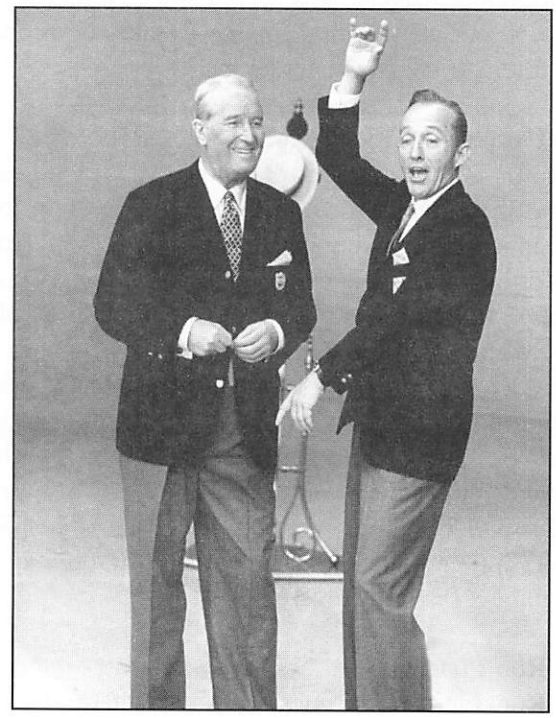
Greg Van Beek, rolls off the tongue nicely doesn't it! Malcolm raves about him each year and if you knew what I now know you would exclaim with me 'This is THE man!' Why? Read on……..

They say 'knowledge is power' and too right! I discovered that about a week before the Leeds meeting. Greg was just a name for me until then and a fellow in the States who kept sending Malcolm loads of material Bing related, rare film footage, outtakes, etc etc !!! In a 'Facebook' moment I thought I'll just touch base with Greg and see what comes back. Wow! What a lot came back! (For want of a better phrase).

Within minutes of my *Facebook* friend request and a little message to Greg, he came back to me confirming the friend request, entering into dialogue and inviting me to view his page and listen to his 'Nostalgia' broadcasts from the States. So armed, I went straight into the site and could not believe what I found. The man must know literally everything and anything about anyone who sings, or has sung! As for his Nostalgia programme, it's just great. I recommend him to you. Well done Greg!
On this occasion Greg had put together a DVD of Bing with various guests, the fifth year he has provided rare material from his vast collection. He must have almost exhausted it now, but who knows what else he might find. Perhaps he'll come to Leeds! What about it Greg? A keynote speaker?

We had Bing and Dean with a 'swell party', plus a song with Patti Page, Bing and Dean in two rocking chairs with what looked like a glow from a halo round their heads. (A trick of the light no doubt!). Whilst watching their light hearted chat, I got to thinking about something else in Andy Williams' book when he said that despite Crosby's off stage reluctance to engage on occasions, he never experienced that with Bing. However with Dean Martin it was different, Dino notoriously keeping himself to himself and not letting anyone get to know him well. Interesting!

Maurice Chevalier perhaps stole some of the limelight from Bing in their 1961 show. He really was quite a big and imposing figure, but I thought they blended well. Then suddenly what looked like a revolving fairy on a musical box came on stage and I was reliably informed it was Carol Lawrence. Bing and Maurice then did a comparison of their 'little black books'. (Try to imagine I've written that with a French accent). In this sketch their musical lady friends included Amy, Rosie, Mimi, Susie, Ida, Gigi, Charmaine, Candy, Chiquita, Lucille, Louise, Mexicali Rose, Linda, Margie and rather worryingly, Maurice thanking heaven for little girls. (I jest!)



with Maurice on their 1961 TV show.

Bing sang 'Love is Wonderful the Second Time

Around', then a rather disturbing looking duet with son Gary, appearing slightly haggard, singing 'Teamwork' with his dad! Yeah right! This was followed by an inspirational version of 'Climb Ev'ry Mountain', Bing singing with a rather sweet sounding choir with lots of heavenly angelic oh's and ah's. I loved this and had the same reaction as when I had played Andy Williams' 'The Impossible Dream' just days after his death, rather a large lump in my throat and slightly wet corners of the eyes! Watch it on You Tube, see what I mean!

We then had a duet with a guy called John Bubbles. Yes John Bubbles! No I hadn't heard of him either! But some had! He was good and recovered well after Bing had taken the wrong hat off the rack during the song. Bing's 'The Men in My Little Girl's Life' brought another tear, being a dad! And there was a lively duet with Joe Bushkin of 'Talk to the Animals'. However, my most disliked song and 80's disco experience was when we were obliged to stand on the dance floor and do what 'Simon Says'! So when I saw Bing doing it with about twenty young children, my reaction was....Oh Bing no, please don't!!!!!

A great collection though Greg and many thanks mate!

Dinner

At last! After arriving late and missing lunch, was I happy to find that dinner was at 6pm instead of 5.30pm? Yes of course, no problem, what's food anyway!

Well actually it was worth waiting for, and in a different, more intimate room with great service from the Weetwood Hall staff. Apart that is from the coffee, which unknown to me whilst I had been talking non-stop on the Essex mob's table, which included Bert Bishop and Margaret Kliskey, was served stone cold. They told everyone but me, waiting for me to take a gulp of ice cold filter coffee. A conspiracy I say!

What's coming? By Malcolm

Malcolm listed a number of Bing related goodies just around the corner and I'll briefly mention them to wet your appetites, knowing that they will appear in detail in the forthcoming magazine. Sepia will be issuing a "twofer" CD containing the rare soundtrack LPs of *Say One for Me* and *The Road to Hong Kong* in the New Year. Also, they are planning to issue a CD in May of 30 songs sung by Bing on the *Kraft Music Hall* but never recorded commercially by him. Another CD being prepared for Sepia by Geoff Milne and our Editor will comprise of Bing's songs from the Armed Forces Radio Service programmes. Watch out for 'Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer'. Lovely!

The Ron Field Spot

Our Ron Field is an interesting character! 'The Man Who Never Gives Up' is what Malcolm called him! Trying to unravel the intricate and compelling trail of Ron's hunting down of various celebrities and sportsmen with a connection to Bing is mind blowing! And recording notes of his presentation is challenging, to say the least! This I would hasten to add, is not in any way a criticism, but the pathways through each successful operation Ron embarks upon is like a mystery thriller which goes off in all sorts of directions. This said I'll try to do justice to what emerged at the meeting. Ron mate, I would really encourage you to write an overview at some stage of all your exploits, from the Crosby era, to his sons' activities and to the Bing related others who have either responded, or ignored, later to be chased, that you have encountered. Fascinating stuff!

For those who have read the previous reports of our meetings, you will have seen how Ron has found himself in various locations over the years across the Globe, whereby he has met Bing Crosby, plus his golfing sons and a whole host of others. His passion for Bing and stories relating to him could fill a volume and the lengths he will go to would frighten the life out many a mere mortal.

On this occasion he had an array of scalps, including Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player on DVDs, letters from Pat Boone, the Offices of James Garner and Peter Alliss. By this you will realise that golf plays a major part of Ron's 'Operation Get a Celebrity to Talk' (My words, not his!)

Jack Nicklaus (right) talks with Bing and Tournament organiser Bob Hoag (centre) on May 25, 1976 at Muirfield Memorial Golf Club.

Jack Nicklaus related some great Bing stories, one being his most embarrassing moment, when a voice on the phone sang 'Happy birthday' to him, his response being 'To whom am I speaking please', only to find it was Bing himself! He also talked about Bing's great influence on golf and that he regarded him as 'a great man'. He went on to say that he had not actually been close to Bing and had not played much with him, but that 'he was always very nice to me and interested in what I was doing'. He also said that Bing's son Nathaniel is 'a good player' and that his dad would have been so proud if he had seen his later golfing achievements.

Ron was really impressed with Pat Boone, one of our honorary members, who responded positively three times to Ron's letters, this unlike others to whom he had sent up to thirteen emails and received no acknowledgement!

Ron met Gary Player at golf tournaments and a DVD featuring Gary arrived just before this meeting. Gary was full of praise for Bing saying 'It's so easy to say something about such a man like Bing Crosby and he was very influential in his life.' He talked about Bing's love of and influence on the game of golf and how when playing a shot, he would be 'humming or singing a song' as he played a stroke.

Time was getting tight at Leeds, so two of Ron's emails had to be omitted, but he gave them to me and there were nice quotes from both Mr. Golf himself, Peter Alliss and also from Mary Ann Rea, representing James Garner.

Peter said that he first met Bing in 1955 whilst playing at the Bing Clambake at Pebble Beach, his partner being Robert Wagner. Peter found Bing to be a 'gentle man who loved his golf'. He also spoke about a 1976 Pro Celebrity Series at Gleneagles, when Bing now 'quite elderly still loved his golf, played a nice game and was a very good companion'. He also said, which sounds rather nice:

'He was by no means a show-off and I've been very surprised at some of the words that have been written about him since his death, some of them not very complimentary. I certainly never discovered anything in his personality that in any way made him an unpleasant man. It was a privilege and pleasure to have known him and for him to die on the golf course in Madrid in the company of Manuel Pinero was indeed poetic.'

Peter also added a PS saying 'I hope by now you've had a response from some of the 'big names' but sometimes you realise that 'big names' aren't so big after all!'

What a great message and thanks to Ron and especially to one of the greats of the golfing world, Peter Alliss.

The email from the James Garner camp was short and sweet, but positive, with his representatives remembering having to fit Mr. Garner's filming schedule around Bing's Pro-Am each year.

So how's that Ron, I promised to get as much in as I could and keep hunting!

Bing at the Movies DVD – Volume 4

Malcolm had compiled what has become a regular finale to the annual meetings, a two hour feast of 'Bing at the Movies'. Songs in the compilation are listed below. As you will see, the attraction is the sheer scale of Malcolm's presentation, with excerpts and songs not normally featured by the various TV and radio channels.

1. Just One More Chance 2. Learn to Croon 3. Moonstruck 4. May I? 5. June in January 6. Love Is Just Around the Corner 7. With Every Breath I Take 8. Moonburn 9. You're the Top (1936) 10. I'm an Old Cowhand 11. Sweet Is the Word for You 12. I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now 13. Still the Bluebird Sings 14. My Heart Is Taking Lessons 15. This Is My Night to Dream 16. I Have Eyes 17. East Side of Heaven 18. I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams 19. Sweet Potato Piper 20. Pessimistic Character 21. Only Forever 22. Memphis Blues 23. Dixie 24. Ave Maria 25. Swinging on a Star 26. Let's Take the Long Way Home 27. Don't Fence Me In 28. I've Got My Captain Working for Me 29. The Donovans 30. You're in Love with Someone (& reprise) 31. High on the List 32. Life Is So Peculiar (with Groucho) 33. Accidents Will Happen 34. Your Own Little House 35. Misto Christofo Columbo 36. To See You Is to Love You 37. The Merry-Go-Round 38. Cela M'Est Egal 39. Snow 40. True Love 41. Teamwork 42. Holiday Inn finale

Highlighted here was the phenomenal range of material delivered by Bing Crosby and his co-stars throughout his long film career, the massive collection of songs and the endless actors, singers, choirs, bands, orchestras, as well as the cameramen, lighting people, backroom staff, writers and composers who found much needed employment in a competitive and challenging industry. When one considers the world events which took place during Crosby's acting career, not to mention a World War, which he managed to have an impact on through visits and concerts in occupied Europe and fund raising concerts, appearances and golf matches, and see all this in such a brilliant compilation, you can only sit back in utter amazement and wonder! The DVD itself was then auctioned and raised an incredible £40 for the club funds.

It's a pity in some ways that Malcolm's contribution is restricted to a relatively small audience, it certainly deserves better. But those of us who hang on to the memory of a long dead musical and acting genius, can only be captivated by an ongoing willingness to bring us closer to an ordinary, if extremely rich guy, who we all wish could have lived forever.

Are we a bit obsessive? Living in the past perhaps? Who gives a damn!

Our little gathering of forty odd people are happy to indulge our combined admiration of our man from Spokane, who became the most popular man on the planet and who touched millions of lives, in particular at

some very distressing times.

So here we are. Some 35 years after Bing's death and 47 years after the first annual dinner/meeting was inaugurated, voting once again to come to Leeds in 2013 and make it 48 years. Some may not make it and no doubt more may leave us as the years go by, as many have before. But whilst Bing's music remains in the public domain, we'll continue to celebrate it.

The End of a Perfect Day

So the meeting ended at 11.00pm and with Bing's music in the background, we packed up and went our separate ways. Hey, but there was always breakfast at Weetwood the following morning! Bring on the eggs and bacon!

Bob Halls **bobhals@talk21.com**

(Editor: Thanks Bob for a superb report. It is really hard work to record what's happening at the meeting and I believe that Bob had 38 pages of notes to précis into his final report! The meeting did seem to go well but I probably tried to pack too much material into the hours allotted to us which meant I had to cut out one item and also restrict the time available to Ron Field. We are supposed to finish at 10 p.m. but as Bob has pointed out it was 11 p.m. before we departed after our annual injection of Crosbyana. Well we only meet once a year so perhaps I can be excused for attempting to fit so much in!

A footnote to Bob's comments about the hat. He has since been to show the hat to his father and this is what he told me in an email.

> Visited my father today, he couldn't believe he was holding and wearing Bing's hat, he just sat there holding it and turning it in his hand, repeating over and over again "I can't believe I'm holding Bing's hat." Then he went quiet and I realised he was quietly sobbing, so I put my arm round him and he cried openly. You see, my mother and his song from their engagement was 'True Love'. The memories must have flooded through him at that point, she died 5 years ago! He said, "This has made my life complete." Think on that when you speak to Michael, just through one little gesture and considering me for custodian of the hat and what it can bring!

Talking about the hat, I took a photo of Ron Field wearing it and when he got home he wrote to the local paper, The Chronicle, Centralia, Washington State and they published the photo along with Ron's letter which read:

> This is just a reminder that Tacoma-born Bing Crosby died on Oct. 14, 1977, so this year marks the 35th anniversary of his passing. I recently went to England to attend a meeting of the International Club Crosby in Leeds. Famed golfers Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player sent the group DVDs about Crosby, which were screened at the meeting.

Bob Halls mentioned the letters from Pat Boone to Ron Field and I thought you might like to read the lovely letter Pat sent to "The Man Who Never Gives Up".)

Hi Ron! (February 14, 2012)

On the rush as always, but here are a couple of memories for you.

As my early recording career got under way, while I was transferring from North Texas State to Columbia University, intent on becoming a teacher / preacher - I got a letter from my idol, Bing Crosby. I'd never met him, though he had heard that he was truly my role model, and took the time and interest to write me a little advice.

I'm paraphrasing, but the basic message was that I shouldn't have signed on for a weekly television show, because TV can "wear out your welcome" pretty quickly. But since I had done it, he wished me well, and left me with some sage words from a great performer named George M. Cohan - "Never stay on too long" and he signed it "the above gratis, Bing".

It is a monumental treasure for me to this day, and his personal secretary told me it was very unusual for him to initiate a correspondence or write a letter to someone he didn't know, but that he was watching my early career with real interest and approval. In fact, he and Frank Sinatra both separately referred to me several times as "the great white hope", a guy who was singing rock and roll; but could sing ballads and pop songs as well.

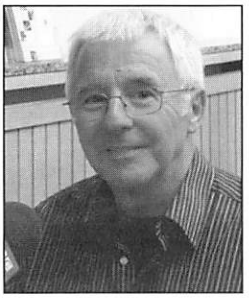
Subsequently, Shirley my wife and I were invited by Bing to enjoy a private evening in his home in Palm Desert, overlooking Indian Wells golf course, along with his buddy Jimmy Van Heusen. He was so hospitable, so affirming and helpful, and I will treasure it always. After that, he invited me about 18 years straight to play in his Crosby Tournament at Pebble Beach, and to sing more than once at his Saturday Night Clam Bakes.

Eventually, Dinah Shore devoted one of her hour programs to a tribute to Bing, and invited only two guests to join her and the guest of honor - Phil Harris and me. I donned a snap brim hat, carried a 9 iron and a pipe in my hand, and sang a medley of some of his hits. I seem to remember "In the Cool of the Evening", "Dear Hearts And Gentle People", and ended with "Where the Blue of the Night ...". Singing in front of Bing, his songs, made my throat feel like it had turned to plaster of Paris, but I got them out anyway, and Bing smiled and nodded his approval. I wish to goodness I had made sure to get a video tape of that program – it would join my other Crosby mementos. Thanks to his movies and recordings, Bing will always be one of America's great treasures - and one of mine personally.

Warmly

Pat Boone

BING ON THE BOX



Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights - USA & Canada

Only a few Bing films have been shown, namely:-

Going My Way	TCM
High Society	TCM
Let's Make Love	TCM
Pennies from Heaven	Antenna TV

USA Radio

The Crosby radio shows – which have kindly been made available by Bing Crosby Enterprises – have continued to be heard at weekly intervals on Sirius XM Radio's 40s on 4 channel. The shows air on Saturdays at 6 pm (ET) with rebroadcasts on Sundays at 11 am (ET) and Mondays at 12 midnight (ET). Sirius edits them by taking out the original commercials and inserting their own announcements. Two shows are broadcast, one after the other, with a few extra songs being added to fill out the hour. The contents of the weekly broadcasts since our last issue was prepared were:

1. Philco Radio Time 1st October 1947
Guests: Gary Cooper and Peggy Lee
Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 4th October 1953
Guest: Gary Crosby
(to complete the one hour time shot, Sirius added several songs from the Philco show of 30th April 1947 featuring Groucho Marx and Dorothy Shay)

2. Philco Radio Time 5th March 1947
Guest: Al Jolson
Kraft Music Hall 2nd September 1943
Guest: Frank McHugh
(plus four songs from the Philco show of 19th November 1947)

3. Philco Radio Time 30th April 1947
Guests: Groucho Marx and Dorothy Shay
Kraft Music Hall 16th November 1944
Guest: Frank Sinatra
(plus three songs from KMH 19th April 1945 and two songs from Philco 11th December 1946 to complete the hour)

4. Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield, 26th March 1952
Guests: Anna Maria Alberghetti and Marilyn Maxwell
Kraft Music Hall 3rd May 1945
Guests: The King Cole Trio
(plus a sizeable extract from KMH 8th February 1945 to fill the hour-long slot)

5. Kraft Music Hall 4th April 1946
Guests: Georgia Gibbs and Frank Morgan
Philco Radio Time 19th February 1947
Guests: Judy Garland, William Frawley and Leo McCarey
(plus a number of songs from the Philco show of 6th October 1948, also featuring Judy Garland)

6. Kraft Music Hall 3rd May 1945 (listed by Sirius as 3rd May 1950 which may explain why it was repeated so soon)
Guests: The King Cole Trio
Philco Radio Time 6th November 1946
Guests: Lina Romay and Ralph Mendez
(plus a number of songs from the Philco show of 15th October 1947)

7. Kraft Music Hall 5th April 1945
Guests: Florence Alba, The King Cole Trio
Philco Radio Time 30th March 1949
Guest: Dennis Day
(plus a number of songs from the GE show of 15th November 1953)

8. Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 16th October 1952
Guests: The Bell Sisters and Helen O'Connell
Command Performance #30, 30th August 1942
with James Cagney, Bert Wheeler and Connee Boswell
(three songs from the GE show of 9th April 1953 were used to complete the hour)

Bing reads over the script with the Bell Sisters.

9. Kraft Music Hall 9th September 1943
Guest: Phil Silvers
Command Performance #31, 18th September 1942
(recorded 30th August 1942)
With Connee Boswell, Hedy Lamarr, Kay Kyser and Abbott & Costello

10. Philco Radio Time 31st March 1948
Guest: Dick Powell
Philco Radio Time 16th October 1946
Guest: Bob Hope
(plus three songs from the Chesterfield Show of 21st September 1949)

11. Kraft Music Hall 25th January 1945
Guests: The Andrews Sisters

Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 11th October 1953
Guest: Rosemary Clooney
(plus three songs from the Philco Show of 14th April 1948)
12. Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 2nd April 1953
Guest: Rosemary Clooney
Kraft Music Hall 24th February 1944 (listed by Sirius as 7th February 1944)
Guest: Phil Silvers
(and three songs from the KMH of 16th November 1944)
13. Kraft Music Hall 1st March 1945
Guest: Sandra Berkova
Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 13th November 1952
Guest: Dinah Shore
(and two songs from the Philco Show of 14th April 1948)
14. Bing Crosby Show for General Electric, 12th March 1953
Guest: James Stewart
Kraft Music Hall 21st February 1946
Guests: Frank Morgan and Eddy Duchin
(plus three songs from the Chesterfield Show of 18th October 1950)
15. Kraft Music Hall 20th January 1944
Guest: Dale Evans
Philco Radio Time 16th October 1948
Guest: Judy Garland
(plus five songs from the KMH of 9th September 1943)
16. Philco Radio Time 29th October 1947
Guests: Victor Moore, Boris Karloff and Gale Robbins
Command Performance #36, 13th October 1942
With Mary Martin, Dinah Shore and The Charioteers
(plus three songs from the Chesterfield Show of 21st September 1949)

Greg Van Beek has been continuing his weekly radio series called *Nostalgia Radio Time* on 1420 AM WJUB. Greg's show is on for an hour each Saturday starting at 10 pm (CST) / 11 pm (ET) and always includes a "Bing Sings" segment. Tune in, either locally via your radio at 1420 AM, or online at the www.1420thebreeze.com website. For those listening via their iPhone or Android, download the free TuneIn Radio app and search for WJUB. You can listen to the previous two weeks shows by going to www.1420thebreeze.com and clicking on the 'audio archives' link. Among the highlights broadcast over the months was Greg's tribute to Andy Williams (we heard Bing on "Swinging on a Star" and "In a Little Spanish Town" from Andy's TV show), a homage to the Mills Brothers (Greg included Bing singing "Dinah" with them at the Pasadena concert) and the entire Kraft Music Hall broadcast of May 3, 1945 when the guest was Nat King Cole.

On October 13, Greg devoted the whole of his program to remembering Bing on the 35th anniversary of his passing. The songs played were: The Way We Were; I Found a Million Dollar Baby (1940); As Long As I'm Dreaming; Don't Let That Moon Get Away; The Friendly Islands; How Important Can It Be?; Katrina; The Land Around Us; The Only Way To Go (October 11, 1977) and then he finished with the entire *Philco Radio Time* show from October 29, 1947 with Boris Karloff and Victor Moore. Greg put on a Halloween special on October 27 and naturally he included Bing's "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" story.

Arne Fogel's Saturday night radio program "The Bing Shift" is broadcast at 7 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN. and it can be picked up internationally, via the KBEM-JAZZ 88 website.

Go to http://arnefogel.com/index.php/home/ for a link. On Arne's July 21st show for example, his title was: **Bing Sings: "Revamped & Remade Songs!"** and we heard "Buffalo Gals" (with Rosemary Clooney), "Dance with a Dolly" (1968), "Medley: Heavenly Night / My Shawl", "Adios Senorita (with Rosemary Clooney), "King's Serenade", "Home in Hawaii"
PLUS:
"There's No Business Like Show Business" (with The Andrews Sisters and Dick Haymes), "That's All I Want from You", "Here Is My Heart" (1933), "You're in Love with Someone", "It's Within Your Power", "Swinging on a Star", "Pale Moon", "Shadows on the Window" and "Pretty Baby".

Rich Conaty's long-running "The Big Broadcast" show from New York puts a musical spotlight on the classic sounds of the 1920s and '30s. It's heard on Sunday nights from 8pm-Midnight and you can listen again through the WFUV archives on the Internet.

TV highlights - UK

Not too much to report on the TV scene in the UK either and the only films shown were:

The Country Girl	Sky Classics
The Greatest Show on Earth	More4

Duets: The Andy Williams Show (first shown in 2009) was repeated on BBC4 on August 17 and this included a great clip of Bing singing with Andy in 1966.

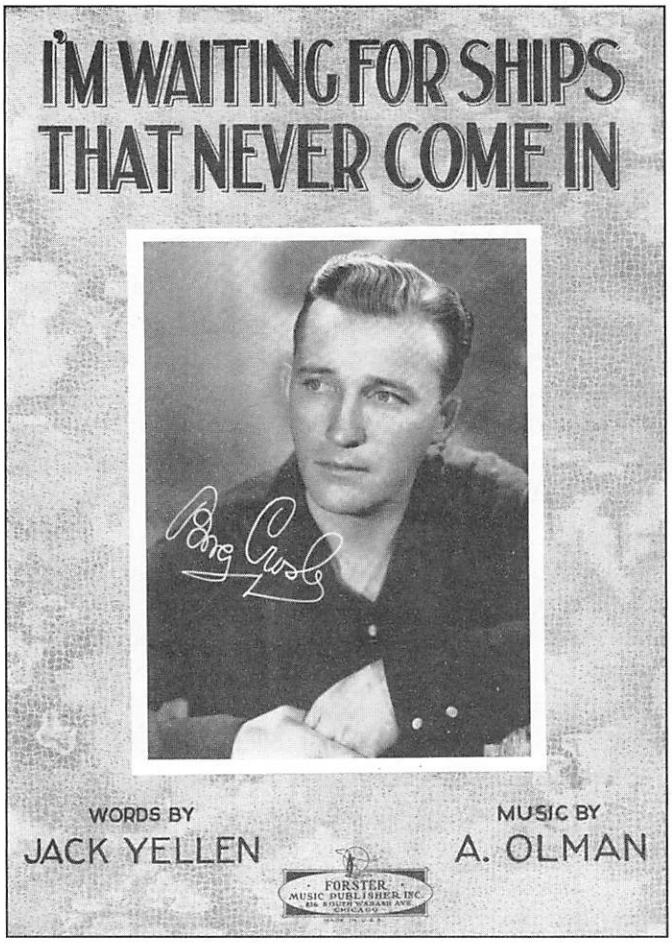
UK radio

Colin Stewart drew our attention to the excellent Radio 4 weekly obituary programme, "Last Word" which had a piece on Andy Williams on September 30 and naturally Bing's "Swinging on a Star" was played. Michael Parkinson was the main narrator because he had become quite a friend following Andy's two appearances on his show and he apparently introduced Andy to cricket! Parkinson talked about Andy's homespun style and said "...he copied from Crosby, they all did....he wasn't Sinatra, who could be, but he was one of the best along with Como and Crosby..."

The National Presenters

Russell Davies on his BBC Radio2 show on Sunday

evenings focuses on the art, craft and inspiration of the popular song. Bing was heard frequently during the period and the varied selections went from "Bless 'Em All" to "Hindustan" through "That's a Plenty" (with Connee) and on to "I'm Waiting for Ships That Never Come In" and "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?".



With the Olympic Games due to start in London, Russell looked for songs which might link in with the Games and his producer Roy Oakshott contacted me seeking a song called "Yachting" which was used on a couple of occasions in Bing's Flop Parade skits. I provided both versions and on his July 22 broadcast Russell used the one from the Philco show of 15th October 1947. Russell mounted a short tribute to Andy Williams on October 14 and started off with "Swinging on a Star". Bing popped up later in the show with "A Ghost of a Chance".

On other nationally networked programmes, **Desmond Carrington's** Friday night show usually has a particular theme each time and Bing has been heard occasionally with songs such as "I Love You Samantha", "Row Row Row" and "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive".

Elaine Paige on Sunday (Radio 2, Sundays 1 p.m.) includes a Crosby song now again and she has chosen "True Love", "Road to Morocco" and "Well, Did You Evah" for our entertainment.

The final hour on BBC Radio2 on Sunday nights is still being taken by **David Jacobs**. On his July 22 show, David noted the death of Celeste Holm and played the Holm / Sinatra duet of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" from *High Society* and followed this with "I Love You Samantha" and "Well, Did You Evah" from the same film. Bing was then completely forgotten until October 21 when "Once in a While" was heard. Most unlike David to neglect our man in that way.

The local radio presenters

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria (and on the Internet at www.bbc.co.uk/radiocumbria) invariably features Bing on her Sunday afternoon show (4-6 p.m.) and in the four month period ending on October 28 she played an incredible mix of Bing's songs. In all, Anne included 38 songs ranging from diverse tracks such as "Thanks" to "The Friendly Islands", "Everybody Step" and "Beautiful Memories". Anne is easily the winner of the "Bing on the Box" award again and she continues to welcome requests by email to *anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk.* There's a "Listen again" facility for up to 7 days after the initial broadcast.

I usually depend on Stan White for details of songs played by **Bill Rennells** on his *Harmony Nights* show but Stan had to miss several broadcasts so we don't have a full rundown of everything played by Bill. Nevertheless from what we do know, Bill has played plenty of Bing thanks to many requests from Trevor and Pat Wagstaff and from Ian Lawrence. Trevor had our Leeds meeting highlighted when he had "A Perfect Day" played. Ian marked the anniversary of Bing's passing by requesting his last recording "Once in a While". *Harmony Nights* is heard on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet for three hours starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings. This show also has a "Listen Again" option. Email Bill with your Bing requests at *bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk.*

BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** often plays Mr. Crosby on his programme of big band swing and balladeers each Sunday from 3pm to 6pm. The songs heard varied from "It Must Be True" (1930) to "Mona Lisa" (1956). There's a "Listen again" facility too. Email requests to *howard.leader@bbc.co.uk.*

"The Late Paul Barnes", the big band and jazz oriented show hosted by **Paul Barnes** continues to be heard for two hours over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet starting at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights. The "Listen again" facility is in place for this show as well. Go to www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk for this. Over the last four months, Paul has faithfully built a useful Crosby segment around the ICC calendar on the first Sunday of each month and generally he has approved of our choice of the Song of the Month. However in October he wouldn't play "Blue Hawaii" ("almost unbearable, I'll spare you the ordeal") and instead played the fluffed version of "Sweet Is the Word for You" followed by "I Have Eyes". Paul's programme usually concentrates on big band and jazz so one can appreciate that "Blue Hawaii" did not fit in. At my

request, Paul suggested songs for the 2013 calendar and we have used many of these.

Keith Richmond drew our attention to **Sandie Dunleavy's** regular programmes on BBC Radio York and on October 14, she put on a superb tribute to the groaner playing: Dear Hearts and Gentle People - Give Me the Simple Life - Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson) - Moonlight Becomes You - Swinging on a Star - Macnamara's Band - Galway Bay - Play a Simple Melody.

Jim Reilly's Bing show continues to be heard on Angel Radio (www.angelradio.co.uk) on Tuesday nights at 10:30 p.m. UK time.

Also we must not overlook two other shows that like to feature our man and these are **Swingers & Singers** (Sun. 8-10p.m) presented by David Lowe on several BBC local radio stations in the South West (search under BBC Radio Devon for links) and **Memorable Memories with Mike Carey** (Sundays 4-6p.m.). Go to bbc.co.uk/derby for more details. There is a listen-again facility.

Gwen Harvey regularly listens to **David Allen** on BBC Surrey (simulcast with BBC Sussex & BBC Radio Solent) and Bing is played frequently, often in response to a request from Gwen. The show can be heard on Saturday and Sunday nights starting at 9 p.m. at http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcsurrey and there is a listen-again facility.

John Walton tells us that Lincoln City Radio continue to play plenty of Bing (lincolncityradio.com). Indeed, they now have on their playlist the whole of the Mosaic collection. John has featured Bing a number of times in his 'Crooners' Corner' and did so again on Tuesday October 16th to tie in with the anniversary of Bing's passing.

Australia

The Golden Days community radio station on 95.7 FM in Victoria continues to have a half-hour programme at 3.00 p.m. on Wednesday afternoons called "On Air with Bing" which broadcasts a complete Bing Crosby radio show each week.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Andy Williams, who died on September 25 at the age of 84. He had been suffering from bladder cancer. One of our honorary members, Andy was born in Iowa in 1927 and was part of the Williams Brothers quartet which backed Bing on 'Swinging on a Star" in 1944. Their father had taken the boys from Cincinnati to California in 1943 in the hope that they would break into films - which they did in a small way. One appearance was with Bob Crosby in *Kansas City Kitty* (1944). In 1947, they teamed up with Kay Thompson and put together a much acclaimed night club act. Kay Thompson and the Williams Brothers appeared on Bing's Philco Show in November 1947. The combination eventually broke up and Andy went solo using an act which had been put together for him by Kay Thompson.

He struggled for a while until Bill Harbach (the same man who was behind the Hollywood Palace shows) booked him for Steve Allen's "Tonight" show. After this, Andy starred in a TV show which was the summer replacement for the Pat Boone Show (another honorary member of the ICC) and the rest is, as they say, history. Andy went on to have his own top-rated network TV show and numerous hit records such as "Can't Get Used to Losing You", "Happy Heart", and "Where Do I Begin", the theme song from the 1970 blockbuster film, *Love Story*. He hit the Top 10 of the UK Singles Chart with "Almost There" (1965), "Can't Help Falling in Love" (1970), "Home Lovin' Man" (1970) and "Solitaire" (1973). Changing musical tastes dimmed his career for a while and this also coincided with the break-up of his marriage to Claudine Longet. They divorced in 1975 and the following year she was charged with fatally shooting her boyfriend, alpine ski racer Spider Sabich in Aspen. Williams made headlines as he stood by her side throughout the public trial.

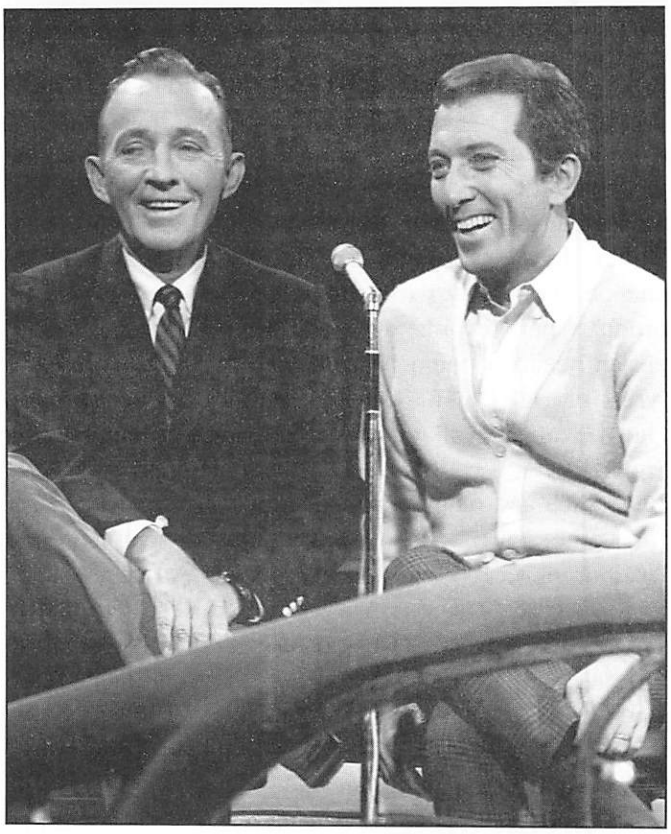
Andy married Debbie Meyer in 1991. He bounced back in the 1990s when he took the brave decision to build his own $12 million theatre in the burgeoning entertainment centre of Branson, Missouri where he performed for several months each year.

In the spring of 1999, Andy found himself back on the record charts once again. In England, a commercial for the Fiat automobile company featured Andy's

version of "Music to Watch Girls By", which was a minor hit for him in 1967. The ad became so popular that the record company re-released the song as a single and this time around it was a top 10 hit. Because of the renewed interest in his music, Andy made his first trip to England in a decade and appeared on several television shows and radio programmes. Subsequently, severe problems with a node on his vocal cords (just like Bing in 1931) forced him to stop singing for eight months but he came back strongly.

Your editor had the great pleasure of interviewing Andy twice, once in Branson and once in Manchester, England. I first met him in his office / cum recording studio at his Moon River theatre and I explained that all of us in the ICC had been particularly grateful to him for his appearance on *The Larry King Show* in 2003 (see BING magazine #136) when he had made many nice comments about Bing. I told Andy that it was becoming harder and harder to keep Bing's image alive and when a legendary performer such as Andy came out on Bing's behalf, it really made a difference. I asked him if he would accept honorary membership of the ICC and he was happy to do so.

I mentioned the recording of "Swinging on a Star" and Andy smiled as he recalled how his father had brought him and his brothers to Los Angeles to make films. He had no particular memories of the recording session other than that they were all in awe of Bing. The appearance on the Philco show in 1947 was his next interaction with Bing and mention of this led Andy to sing the opening bars of 'Hello, Hello' when he and his brothers introduced themselves in song.



Bing guests on Andy's show in 1966.

We jumped ahead to 1966 when Bing appeared on Andy's TV show and he said how great it was to have Bing on the show. He did not have any particular memories of the event as he was taping a programme every week and they all tended to roll into one another with the passage of time. Andy said that he saw Bing frequently in the TV studios and Bing often popped in to see him wearing an old cardigan with a hole in the sleeve. Bing was always generous with his time when they met. I was interested to learn that Bing had written what Andy described as a lovely letter to him when Andy had recorded "The Hawaiian Wedding Song". Bing praised the recording and said how much he liked the song having first heard the original version many years ago in Hawaii.

Our conversation turned to golf. For many years, Andy played in Bing's Pro-Am tournament and I suggested that the courses employed looked very tough and I wondered whether Andy had ever qualified to play on the last day. Andy agreed that they were very difficult courses but nevertheless he had managed to get through to the last round. I responded that at least he had beaten Jack Lemmon who had tried unsuccessfully for over 30 years to qualify for the final. Andy smiled as he said quietly "I beat him by one."

In the USA, Andy enjoyed more than 50 hits in the singles charts and he had 20 charted albums (without including compilations). He also had 23 single hits in the UK. Andy was personally nominated for Emmys and a Golden Globe Award whilst the Andy Williams TV show itself won three Emmys. It has been a real privilege to have Andy Williams as one of our honorary members and we lament his loss.

Marvin Hamlisch, the celebrated composer, left us on August 6 at the age of 68. Among his better known works during the 1970s were adaptations of Scott Joplin's ragtime music for the motion picture *The Sting*, including its theme song, "The Entertainer". He had great success with the film *The Way We Were* in 1974, winning two of his three 1974 Academy Awards. He also won four Grammy Awards in 1974, two for "The Way We Were." Marvin Hamlisch co-wrote "Nobody Does It Better" for the 1977 James Bond film *The Spy Who Loved Me* with his then-girlfriend Carole Bayer Sager. The song went on to be nominated for an Oscar in 1977. He composed the score for the 1975 Broadway musical *A Chorus Line*, for which he won both a Tony Award and a Pulitzer Prize. In the 1980s he had success with the scores for *Ordinary People* (1980) and *Sophie's Choice* (1982). He also received an Academy Award nomination in 1986 for the film version of *A Chorus Line*.

Marvin Hamlisch is one of only eleven people to have been awarded Emmys, Grammys, Oscars, and a Tony. He is also one of only two people to have won those four prizes and also a Pulitzer Prize (the other is Richard Rodgers). Hamlisch has also won two Golden Globes.

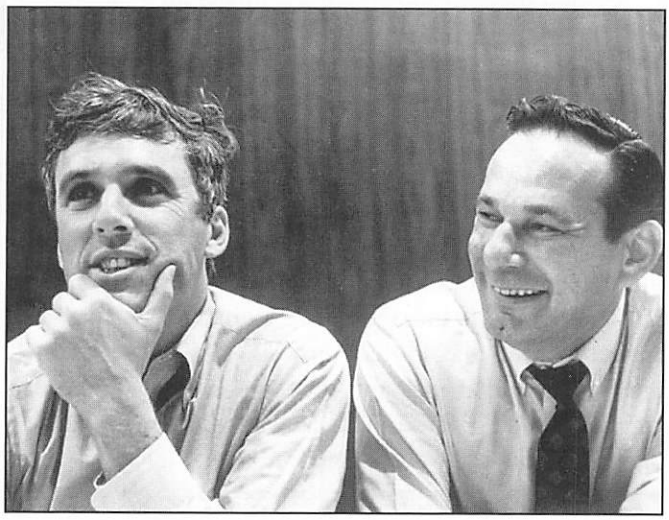
Bing recorded several of his songs including "The Way We Were" and "What I Did for Love" as well as working with Hamlisch on *The Tonight Show* (1976) and *Bell Telephone Jubilee* (1976).

Marvin accompanies Bing and Ray Bolger on *The Tonight Show.*

Tony Martin died on July 27 at the age of 98. A singer-actor from the golden age of Hollywood musicals, he appeared in more than 30 films, most memorably as a thief at odds with Peter Lorre's inspector in 1948's stylish *Casbah*. Twice, songs sung on screen by Martin received Academy Award nominations: "For Every Man There's a Woman" from *Casbah* and "It's a Blue World" from the 1940 film *Music in My Heart*. With his powerful voice and beguiling style, Martin was very popular from the late 1930s through to the 1950s as a singer and enjoyed big hits with songs such as "Tonight We Love", "To Each His Own", "There's No Tomorrow" and "I Get Ideas". His first marriage in 1937 was to Alice Faye but they divorced in 1940. In 1948, he married Cyd Charisse and their marriage lasted sixty years until her death in 2008. Tony Martin and Bing seldom worked together although their paths crossed at social and sporting events occasionally. Your editor had the pleasure of interviewing Mr. Martin by telephone in 2007 whilst researching the Perry Como book produced with Ken Crossland.

Hal David, the lyricist, passed away on September 1st at the age of 91. He was best known for his collaborations with composer Burt Bacharach and his association with Dionne Warwick. As a young man, he turned to journalism as a potential career, and cut his eye teeth at *The New York Post*. While pouring out words of the news in The Post's city room, David dabbled in song lyrics as well, and wrote his first successful lyric for bandleader, Sammy Kaye, in 1947. Other songs came tumbling out of David's busy typewriter and one of the first of these was "Four Winds and the Seven Seas," created with co-writer, Don Rodney, which became a big hit for Sammy Kaye. Bing was one of many artists who also recorded the song.

One of the most productive songwriting teams of the late '50s and the decade of the '60s was born in the offices of The Famous Music Corporation in 1957, when Hal David first met Burt Bacharach. They were offered a room and a piano and there was almost instant rapport. Rapport in turn grew into productivity and the two were soon achieving great success with such titles as "Story of My Life," a hit for country singer, Marty Robbins in the US and for Michael Holliday in the UK. "Magic Moments," an important hit for Perry Como followed that same year. Other hit songs followed, each generating a share of heavy chart activity. Among them were "Wishin' and Hopin'," and "Twenty-four Hours from Tulsa".

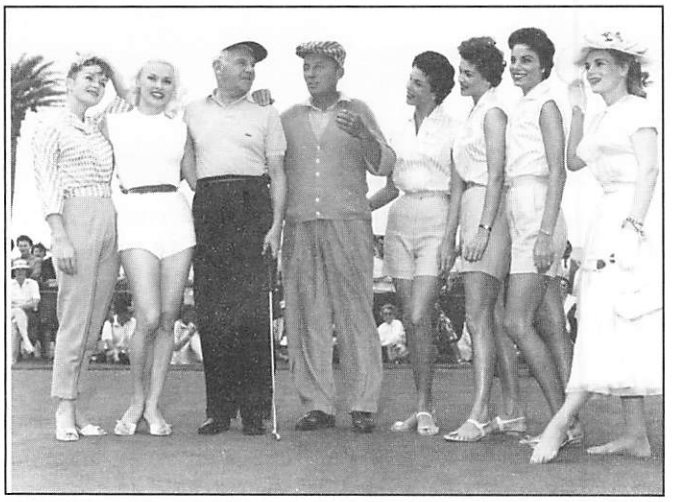


Burt Bacharach (left) and Hal David in 1970.

Their initial success with Dionne Warwick came when she recorded a demo of their song, "Make It Easy on Yourself," heard by and recorded into a hit by Jerry Butler. Later presented by Scepter Records with a chance to not only write songs for Ms. Warwick but to produce her records as well, long runs of success ensued, each of them bearing the estimable trademark lyrics of Hal David. The hits included "Anyone Who Had a Heart", "Walk on By" and "I'll Never Fall in Love Again" (which Bing also recorded). Later, David, with Bacharach and others, produced a collection of top hits for other artists, including the Oscar-winning "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head," "Alfie," "What's New Pussycat," "The Look of Love," (Oscar nominees), "Wives and Lovers," "Casino Royale," "It Was Almost Like a Song," (all Grammy nominees), "This Guy's in Love with You," "Promises, Promises," "Do You Know the Way to San Jose," "A House Is Not a Home," and "Trains and Boats and Planes."

Dorothy McGuire, who reached the top of the pop charts in the 1950s with the McGuire Sisters, one of

the era's most popular vocal groups, died on September 7. Dorothy McGuire was born on February 13, 1928, in Middletown, Ohio. She and her sisters, Christine (the oldest) and Phyllis (the youngest and the lead singer), discovered early on that they had a knack for singing in harmony, and their first public performances were in their mother's church. In 1952, they decided to try their luck in New York and their success was almost immediate. They became regulars on Arthur Godfrey's hugely popular morning television show, where they remained for six years, and began recording for Coral Records, a subsidiary of Decca. They had their first Top 10 record, "Good Night, Sweetheart, Goodnight," in 1954 and followed with several other chart successes including "Sincerely" and "Sugartime" which both reached No. 1 in the Billboard charts. The McGuire Sisters continued to have hits into the early 1960s and to perform until 1968, when they split up. Their farewell performance was on "The Ed Sullivan Show," where they had appeared many times. Phyllis pursued a solo career, while Dorothy and Christine left show business to raise their families. The sisters appeared with Bing on the Bell Telephone Hour in October 1964 and they also interacted with him on a number of occasions as can be seen from the accompanying photograph. Dorothy visited Bing and his family at their home in Las Cruces, Baja California in 1968.



Caption: (L-R) Debbie Reynolds, Mamie Van Doren, Walter Winchell, Bing, Christine McGuire, Phyllis McGuire and Dorothy McGuire of The McGuire Sisters and Marie Wilson attend the Tournament of Champions at the Desert Inn Golf Course on April 17, 1957 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Max Bygraves, who passed away on August 31 aged 89, was a singer and comedian who became famous for his stage performances, notably in 19 Royal Variety Performances, and went on to lead the market in the kind of foot-tapping nostalgia which characterised his "Singalongamax" recordings. He was born Walter William Bygraves and he acquired his stage name during the war as a result of his Max Miller impressions, performed in RAF reviews. In his early teens he supplemented the family income by repairing footwear, and went into the business on his own account during the summer holidays — an early indication of an acute business sense. Lionel Bart later sold Bygraves his *Oliver* score for £350; Bygraves resold the rights for $250,000!

He spent the war as a fitter in the RAF, and in 1945 went to work as a carpenter in East Ham. A chance meeting with an RAF contact secured an appearance in the BBC variety show *They're Out*. He gave his first Royal Variety Performance in November 1950, and was invited to join the radio ventriloquist Peter Brough in *Educating Archie*, the show which "launched", among others, Tony Hancock; Bygraves's then scriptwriter, Eric Sykes; and 14-year-old Julie Andrews, who was ousted from her singing spot when Bygraves arrived.

When he accepted an invitation to spend a month supporting Judy Garland at the Palladium, she was sufficiently impressed to ask him to appear with her at the Palace, New York, where together they sang "A Couple of Swells". He also appeared on the Perry Como Show in 1959 but despite this he made little impact in the USA. During the 1950s there were numerous stage appearances in Britain and Bygraves also wrote "You Need Hands", a song which ran for several months in the Top 20, peaking at No. 3.

With the arrival of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, Bygraves became, seemingly overnight, part of the "Old Guard". His response — to concentrate on television — was typically astute. At the suggestion of his mother, in 1972 Bygraves recorded an album of songs, including "Daisy" and "If You Were the Only Girl in the World", with relatively sparse arrangements for two pianos and a chorus. *Sing Along with Max* was an instant success, and the first of a series of recordings which brought him most of his 31 gold discs.

He continued to appear on television, drawing massive audiences, and in 1983 was appointed an OBE. From 1983 to 1985 he hosted the television show *Family Fortunes*. He also appeared in several films, including *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1951), *Spare the Rod* (1961), *Charlie Moon* (1956) and *A Cry from the Streets* (1958). He did not ever perform with Bing but they golfed together, notably at the Southport and Ainsdale Golf Club in Lancashire on September 24, 1972 in a charity event for the National Society for Cancer Relief in front of a crowd of 6,000.

Louise La Planche, an actress during Hollywood's Golden Age died on September 7 at the age of 93. La Planche's mother had moved to southern California from Kansas and had two daughters, Louise and Rosemary. Louise began her movie career at age 3, playing a gypsy girl in the silent film version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in 1923. Both sisters participated in numerous contests from dancing to beauty pageants, and Rosemary La Planche went on to

win the title of Miss America in 1941. Louise won the title of Miss Catalina in 1939, which led to her signing with MGM, where she had an uncredited role in the movie *Strike up the Band* with Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland. She went on to sign a 4-year contract with Paramount Pictures and had uncredited bit parts in *Holiday Inn* ("girl"), *Road to Morocco* (she played a harem girl who painted Bob Hope's toenails), *Star Spangled Rhythm* ("Swing Shift Singer") and *Here Come the Waves* ("photographer"). Louise married Lester Freedman, a clothing manufacturer, and gave up her film career to concentrate on raising her family. After her husband's death when she was 65, La Planche went back to acting, doing commercials and bit parts on television shows, including *The Golden Girls* and several soap operas. She also popped up in the BBC *Living Famously – Bing Crosby* documentary in 2003 and talked about watching Bing recording "White Christmas".

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

It was with warm nostalgia that I read a retrospective article by Malcolm in the summer edition of BING. His fascinating treatise of the first song Bing had sung in public, "I've Got a Dog Named Rover", took me back in happy memory to the summer of 1974. It was during the first of my three taped radio interviews at the Crosby estate in Hillsborough that I heard the song about a boy and his dog for the first time – sung by "the man himself" with his distinctive whistling obbligato.

Early in our conversation I reminisced back to my early teenage years when I became a Crosby collector. (I still savour the feel and sound of those old shellac 78 rpm discs.) I began my youthful memory by telling Bing about a magical moment that happened in 1943. My father attached to our old windup record player an "electric arm" that propelled the turntable and brought the sound of recorded music through the radio speaker.

"The first Crosby record," I told Bing, "that I heard via this revolutionary new process was 'Whistling in the Wildwood'". His response was not what I had expected. He looked rather mystified and when I said to him "Remember that one?" He said to my consternation "I don`t indeed – are you sure that was the title?" Now I was flummoxed. In a split second I thought to myself, I have spent all his valuable time talking and setting up a record he doesn`t remember. He then surprised me by adlibbing the title as he laughingly sang to a melody that didn`t fit. "Is that how it goes?", he said with a twinkle in his eye. "No," I replied and boldly said "if I had the nerve I would sing it for you."

From that exchange we segued into one of my favourite and most personal sequences on my "Crosby Years" radio series, when he said, "You`re not thinking of `Rover` are you? " "No," I replied, as he had me stumped. "You don`t know that one" he said with a wry smile and some satisfaction. At that time I had never heard the amusing little ditty "I`ve Got a Dog named Rover". I asked him about the song and he told me that it was the first song he had sung in public. "It was at a parish function and my mother had me sing it. I was about ten or eleven years old. I also sang it on the Michael Parkinson Show. He is a kind of Johnny Carson or Merv Griffin type of guy in England. It`s quite a song." He then began to sing his childhood rhyme in a delightful a cappella version. His voice as always was mellow and lilting and his crystal clear whistling echoed throughout the house. Malcolm reminded me a short time later that Bing also sang "Rover" on the Flip Wilson TV show and at his 1977 Palladium farewell concert.

Gord presenting the tapes of the Crosby Years series to Bing and Kathryn, Jan. 12, 1976

When I returned to my Ottawa radio studios following my first Crosby Years' interview with Bing I was excited and had fun editing my tapes. I then sent a produced taped segment to Bing that included "Whistling in the Wildwood" and his moment of temporary memory loss. I received a telephone call from him when he received my air check and said in his self-effacing manner, "I still don't remember it." We both had a good laugh and a happy musical memory.

"Whistling in the Wildwood" was first recorded for Decca by Bing on April 5, 1939. At that same session he recorded "And the Angels Sing".

To quote Bing and Irving Berlin, "May Your Days Be Merry and Bright and May All Your Christmases Be White".

Happy New Year!

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: Gord's wonderful radio series, "The Crosby Years" remains available from him — see Trading Post for details.)

THE WAY WE WERE

The section of the magazine where we look at what was happening in years gone by.

75 YEARS AGO

After his successful trip to Spokane in October 1937, Bing returned to his weekly broadcasts of the *Kraft Music Hall* and the filming of *Doctor Rhythm*. On November 7, Bing defeated Bob Hope in an eighteen-hole golf match. The loser was supposed to act as a stand-in in the other's film and the press covered the match.

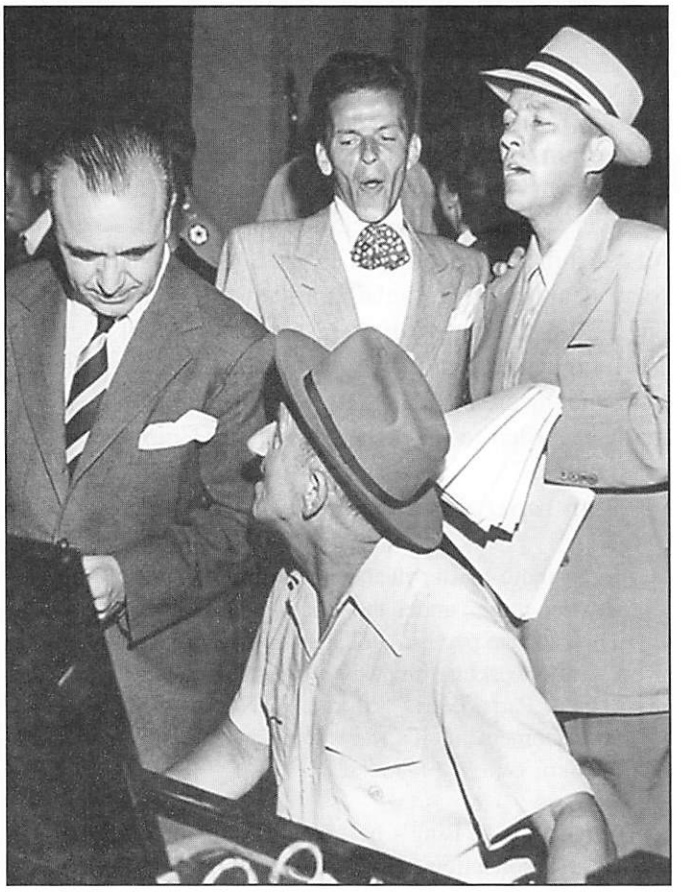
> All joking aside, the golf party at Lakeside, Sunday, given by Bing Crosby to the scribes who were covering his "stand-in" match with Bob Hope, of New York, was a funny one. Bing and Hope started their match at 10:30 am, the luncheon was set at 1 p.m., the newspapermen had to leave to see the pro football game at 1:45 p.m. Crosby finished at 2 p.m., and a good time was had by all. Bing's match finished after the press had gone and he and his group then had lunch at the table deserted by the fast eating scribes some time before. Bing shooting a 73, had all the best of the going and now Hope must act as Crosby's stand-in for one day, without pay, in the filming of *The Badge of Policeman O'Roon.*
> (*Los Angeles Evening Herald Express*, November 9, 1937)

The Badge of Policeman O'Roon was the original name for *Doctor Rhythm*. We cannot trace that Bob Hope actually appeared in the film and it may well be that he simply acted as a stand-in for a day's filming as stated. Perhaps also the match was a publicity gimmick to help lift Hope's profile on the west coast.

The following day, Bing starred in the Lux Radio Theater version of *She Loves Me Not* with Joan Blondell, Nan Gray, Sterling Holloway, and William Frawley on CBS. As outlined by Lionel Pairpoint in a recent article, the Lux Radio Theater was probably the most important dramatic show in radio, running from 1934 to 1955.

Bing finished 1937 off with two great shows. First on December 30 in his *Kraft* show, his guests included Jose Iturbi, Louis Armstrong, and Connie Boswell. Newspaper reviews were favorable.

> ...As usual, though, it was Mr. Bing Crosby, he of the tremendous adjectives and questionable use thereof, who provided the coup de grace, as he is wont to say. His 60-minute cheese seller was as smooth a bit of entertainment as we've ever heard. Even the once stand-offish Jose Iturbi rallied 'round, called Mr. Crosby "Bing," Bob Burns, "Bob," and demonstrated that he's just another guy despite his awesome reputation. His two piano selections, while poorly suited to radio, were masterfully inserted between the "good fellowship" routines.
>
> But the payoff punch comes when Bing's other guests, Connie Boswell and Louis Armstrong, teamed with their host and John Scott Trotter's orchestra for a "jam session" which might not have been as informal as it sounded–but as long as it sounded that way, we're convinced.
> (Herb Caen, *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 3, 1938)



Jose Iturbi helps Jimmy Durante look for a lost chord in a later AFRS show while Bing and Frank look on.

The following day, Bing guested on the premiere broadcast of Paul Whiteman's new radio show for Chesterfield on CBS. The show came from the Wilshire Bell Theatre in Los Angeles. Bing sang "This Is My Night to Dream" and then dueted with Jack Teagarden on "Basin Street Blues".

Bing was placed fourth in the USA box office stars list for 1937. Shirley Temple came first. During the year, Bing had sixteen songs that became chart hits. Not a bad year for Mr. Crosby whose *Kraft Music Hall* was one of the top radio shows too!

50 YEARS AGO

In April 1962, Bing had recorded a sing-along album called *Bing Crosby on the Happy Side* at United Recorders, Hollywood, for Warner Brothers Records. Bing dubbed his voice over accompaniment previously recorded in London. The LP was issued later in the year

by which time Bing had recorded his first solo Christmas album too. These two albums were reviewed by both *BINGANG* and the *Crosby Post* as was the *Holiday in Europe* LP. The release of this latter album had been delayed as Brunswick manager Geoff Milne explained in a letter printed in the October 1962 *Crosby Post*.

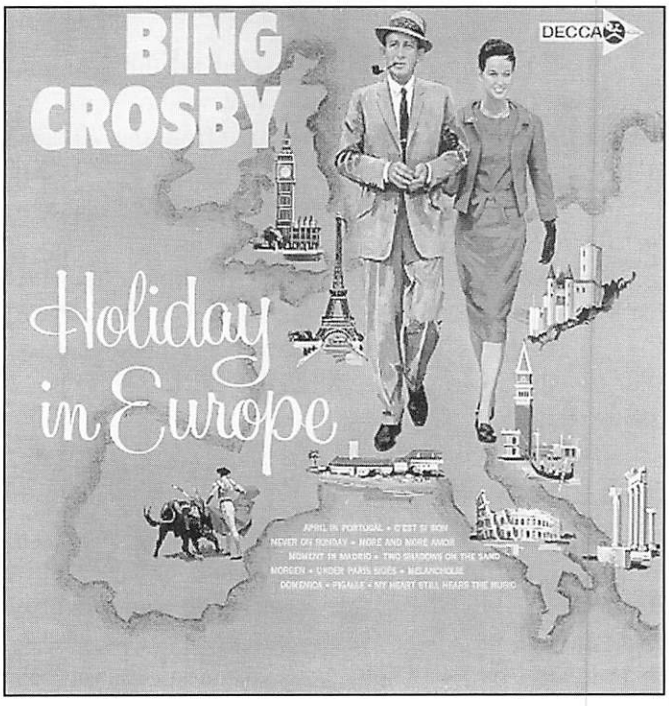
> "The Bing album entitled *Holiday in Europe* is scheduled for release in this country in November. There have been various technical and other reasons why this album has not appeared before, but now that these are overcome we are going ahead with the production. It will be available on Brunswick LAT 8505 and Stereo STA 8505."

The album used orchestral tracks recorded by Malcolm Lockyer and his Orchestra in London in 1960 but Mr. Lockyer was not mentioned on the LP cover – perhaps for "technical and other reasons." Bing had recorded four vocal tracks for the album with Lockyer in London but Leslie Gaylor writing in *Crosby Post* of October 1961 suggested that these would not be used on the LP (and they weren't). He had been told that they were really recorded to meet the Musicians' Union rules and regulations.

Both *Variety* and *Billboard* liked the album.

> In an indie master deal with Project Records, Bing Crosby comes under the Decca banner once again. The package peg is a global song roundup which has Crosby working his way through such entries as "Under Paris Skies," "Morgen," "Never on Sunday" and "Domenica". It's flavorsome and pleasing.
> (*Variety, October 17, 1962*)

> This is one of Bing's best albums in some time. He sings a collection of old favorites in straight style, aided by good ork arrangements. Good songs, well sung, and plenty of time, should help this set sell.
> (*Billboard*, November 3, 1962)



Bing and Kathryn had spent most of August and September in Europe. The December 1962 issue of BINGANG printed a letter Bing had written to Rena Albanesi, President of Club Crosby which was dated October 18, 1962

> Dear Rena,
> Not much to say except "I Wish You a Merry Christmas," which is the title of our new album.
> I returned from Europe, watched the World Series on our Office television, and am off for a bit of hunting.
> Sincerely,
> Bing

The crooner had recorded the *I Wish You a Merry Christmas* album on October 5 singing to musical accompaniment conducted by Peter Matz which had been pre-recorded in July. Again, the trade reaction was positive.

> Crosby is a perennial holiday seller, and this LP should prove an important Christmas item for all dealers. The Crosby touch is everywhere evident and the material is drawn from the great Christmas catalog. Chorus and ork assist der Bingle on such Christmas standards as "Winter Wonderland", "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas".
> (*Billboard*, November 3, 1962)

The album briefly charted for two weeks reaching a number fifty placing in December.

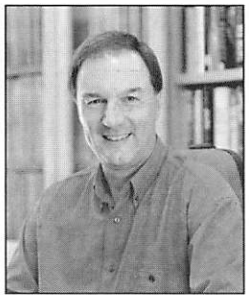
Bing was in pain with his kidney stones again but there was a busy finish to the year as during December he recorded *The Dinah Shore Show* which was shown on NBC-TV on February 17, 1963. He also taped a Christmas television special *The Bing Crosby Show* with Mary Martin which was shown on December 24 to a mixed reaction.

> The potential of this Bing Crosby Christmas Eve special was great as he and guest star Mary Martin opened with "This Is a Lovely Way to Spend an Evening." Unfortunately, though, the two savvy singers didn't live up to the potential. The hour was an overly casual affair that produced little of the magic expected of a Crosby-Martin parlay. The songbag was, for the most part, made up of just a few identifying bars that dissipated the values of the standards put on display. The full-length, special material songs fell short, too....Crosby's material song, 'Doing The Bing', was pegged on his easy-going manner and was given sock production styling by the imaginative choreographic work of Marc Breaux and Dede Wood.
> (*Variety*, December 26)

Also on Christmas Eve, the annual *A Christmas Sing with Bing* radio program was broadcast by CBS. Rosemary Clooney and Johnny Mercer joined Bing in what was the final show of the series which had begun in 1955. Following this TV and radio exposure, Bing's recording of "White Christmas" again entered the charts after Christmas for a week in the No. 38 slot.

KEEPING TRACK

Ken Crossland looks at the new releases



Ken Crossland takes a look at the new releases.

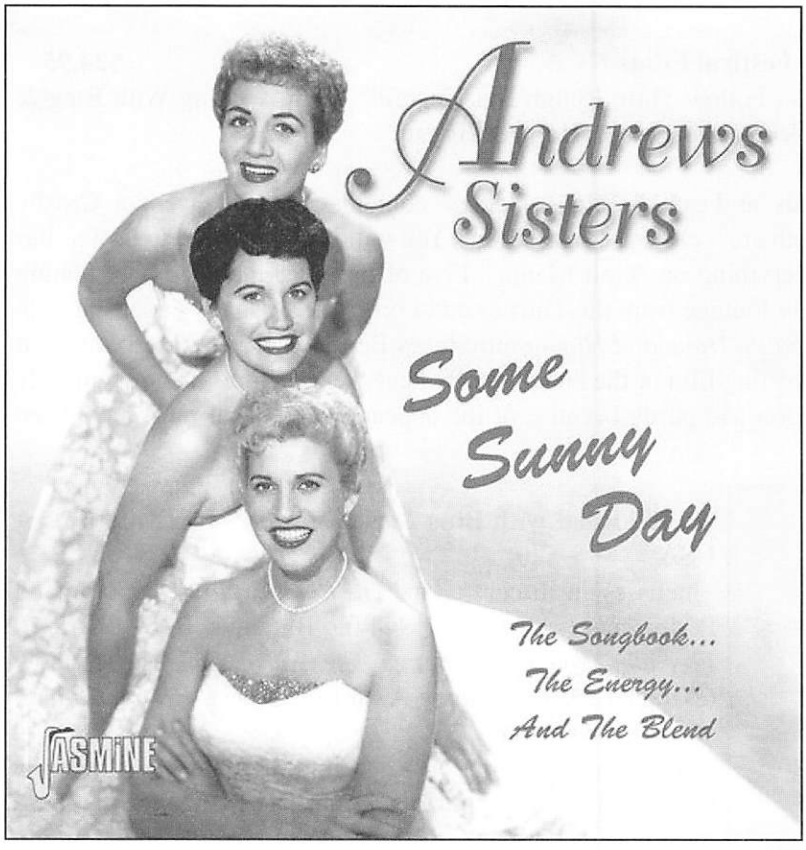
Lean times just now as we wait - and hope - for more goodies from Bing Crosby Enterprises. In the meantime ....

COMPACT DISCS

Very little to get excited about in terms of releases dedicated just to Bing's work. There are a couple of releases that will be out by the time you read this – **'Bing Crosby: Love Is'** from Sounds of Yesteryear and **'Bing'** a 3-CD box set from Memory Lane - but neither is to hand at the time of going to press. More details on these and other items that appear for the Christmas market will feature next time.

There are however a couple of very interesting new box sets around that feature Bing.

The Andrews Sisters - Some Sunny Day **Jasmine JASBOX 29-4** **UK** **£18/$30**



I can't claim to be an authority of any kind on the Andrews Sisters, but this new collection, assembled by US club member Robert Nickora, must be one of the most outstanding compilations of the three sisters. Space precludes a full track listing, but there are 117 titles included here, spread over four discs, and featuring the girls in partnership with a variety of other names. There are 10 tracks with Bing, and others with Al Jolson, Danny Kaye, Dick Haymes plus differing orchestras - Tommy Dorsey, Nelson Riddle, Guy Lombardo to mention but three. The set includes tracks from five early albums, so early that they comprised 78s issued in a booklet form that was indeed an album. When microgroove discs began appearing in the early 50s, these booklet albums often saw re-release as EPs, LPs or 45 rpm sets, but the term "album" stuck. One of the five is *Go West Young Man* which featured eight tracks with Bing. Audio quality is outstanding on the first two discs - I don't recall hearing "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You" sound better - although it tails off a little with some of the later recordings, reflecting perhaps their scarcity. If I were being picky, I'd say how nice it would have been to have the original album artwork re-produced, and also some recording dates, but there is a limit to how much you can get in a booklet. It's a great set.

(Bing tracks only) South America, Take It Away - Go West, Young Man - Along the Navajo Trail - Have I Told You Lately That I Love You - Quicksilver - At the Flying "W" - A Hundred and Sixty Acres - Ask Me No Questions (And I'll Tell You No Lies) – Lock, Stock, and Barrel - The Yodelling Ghost

The Good Ol' Boys Club **Jasmine JASBOX 28-4** **UK** **£18/$30**

This comes from the same source as the Andrews Sisters release, again the product of Robert Nickora. The set is also four CDs, 125 tracks in all, featuring all manner of collaborations of male (mostly!) singers. Bing is represented on two tracks, the 'Well Did You Evah' duet with Sinatra from *High Society* (and a nice, clean mono sound although sadly, Bing's throwaway "newer fellas" line that was on the original soundtrack is missing, as it has been off most

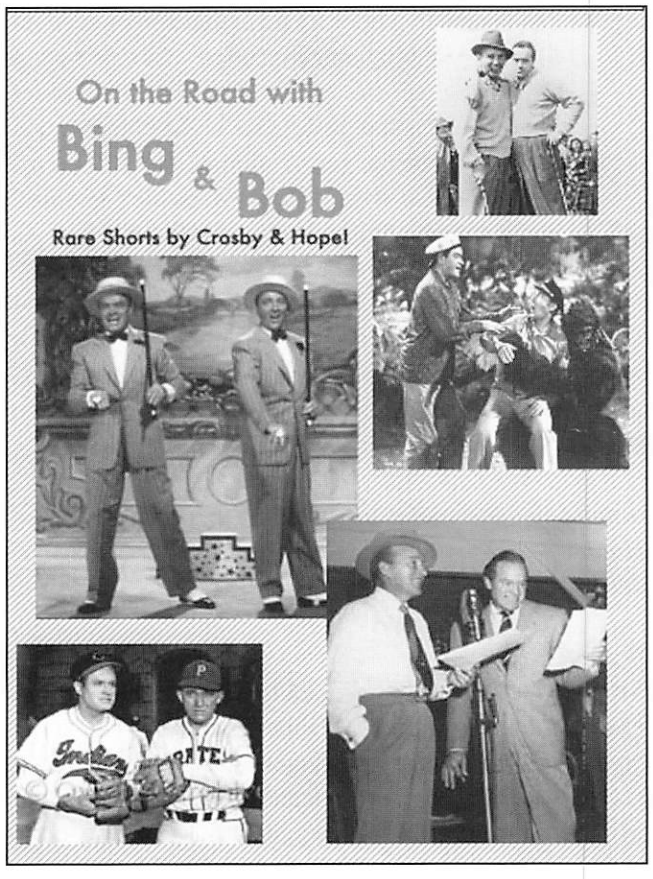
recent releases). 'Hush-A-Bye' is the other track - Bing with Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians, and a very rare item until the *Through The Years* series came along. The rest are ... well, its almost a case of name it and it's here. Everybody from the Everly Brothers through to Eddy Arnold, Dean Martin to Don Cherry. The Mills Brothers of course, the Ames Brothers, the list is almost endless. Lots of the material looks rare and interesting. Good listening.

DVD and Blu-ray

The Bing Crosby Collection - Rare Films **Nostalgia Merchant** **USA** **$28**
DVD 1: The Bing Crosby GE Premier Show (January 3, 1954) & The Edsel Show - Kinescope copies, inferior quality to versions available elsewhere
DVD 2: High Tor (March 1956) with Nancy Olsen & Julie Andrews - reasonable quality
DVD 3: The Bob Hope Show from 1955, with Bing doing a brief guest spot. Poor sound and out of sync, but rare.
DVD 4: The Frank Sinatra Timex Show (1959), with Bing, Dean Martin & Mitzi Gaynor. Similar quality to other versions available, but not bad
DVD 5: Three episodes of "The Bing Crosby Show" sitcom from 1964, "Genius at Work", "Exactly Like Who", "One for the Birds". One episode includes Gary Crosby as guest. Good quality.
DVD 6: 3 Mack Sennett shorts, "Billboard Girl", "I Surrender Dear", "Blue of the Night". First two are good quality but the third is poor.

Golf Mania **Festival Films** **USA** **$24.95**
- includes Goofy Golfers Newsreel,* Golf Magic, Follow Thru, Rough But Hopeful*, Golf, Golfing With Bing & Bob*, Don't Hook Now*, The Golf Specialist (WC Fields), Faith, Hope & Hogan*

One of two welcome releases from our friends at Festival Films. Neither contains material, from a Crosby standpoint, that is particularly new or rare, but both are welcome compilations. You will probably need to be a golfer of sorts to be able to work your way through everything on "Golf Mania". Five of the titles included here feature Bing on the course (marked with * above), mainly footage from the Thirties and Forties, and usually cavorting with Bob Hope rather than playing any serious golf. *Faith, Hope and Hogan* introduces Ben Hogan, the Tiger Woods of his day, to the scene and is perhaps the most interesting film of the bunch, partly because it features some seemingly genuine spontaneous banter between Bing and Bob and partly because of the appearance of what must have been one of the world's first golf carts.



On the Road with Bing & Bob **Festival Films** **USA** **$20**
- includes theatrical trailers, *The Road to Home*, a Command Performance show from 1944 (no Bing, just Bob), *The Fifth Freedom*, *You Can Change The World*, The Edsel Show (extract), 1954 Academy Awards (extract), *Honor Caddie, The Road to Peace*
This second compilation has some films that are similar to the golfing one with Hogan, similar in that they feature messages of faith and good citizenship. Alongside them are some more overt commercial offerings, notably a set of trailers to the Road films and some Hope and company wartime footage. Sound and picture is generally good considering that these things date from pre-historic times!

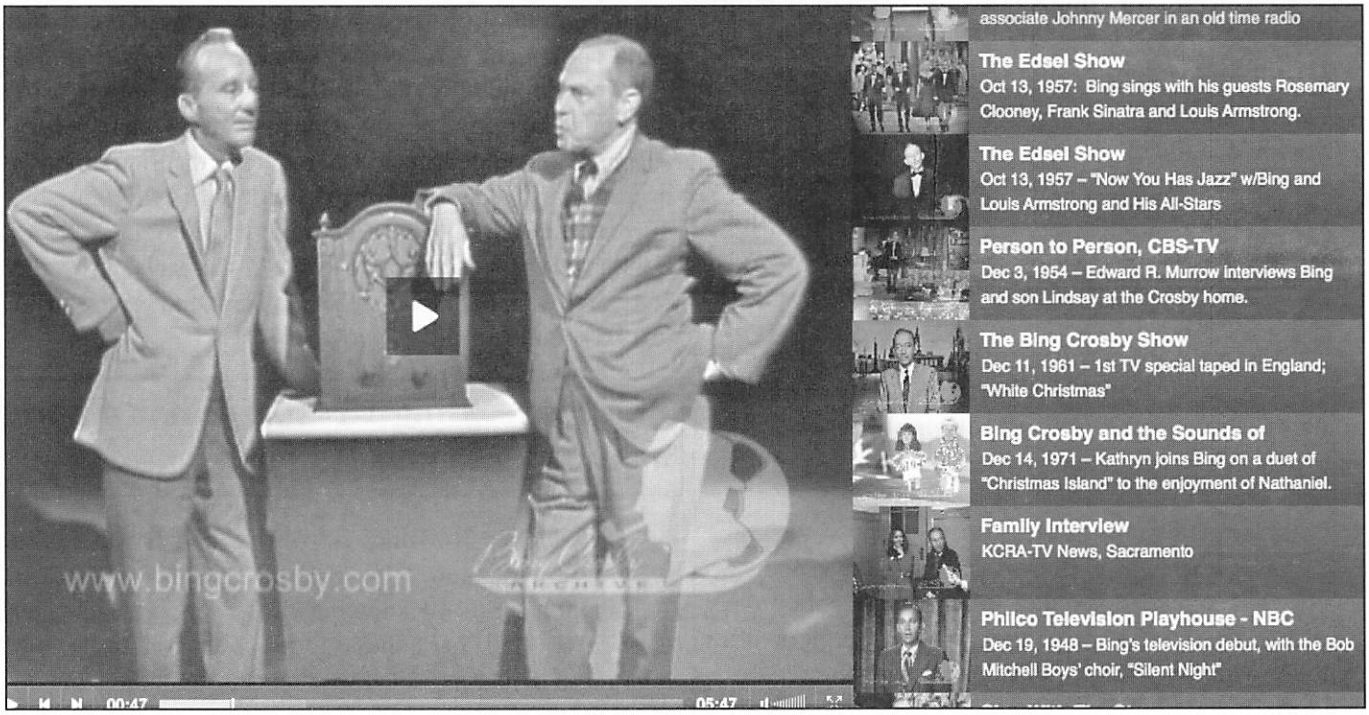
High Time **Twilight Time** **USA** **$29.95**
I mentioned last time around that *High Time* had appeared on Blu-ray disc. It's a limited edition of 3,000 units and can be obtained from screenarchives.com. and from Amazon.

The release attracted a surprising amount of attention from the media, and generally favourable comment. This excerpt from *The New York Times*, no less, is representative.

> "Crosby's Harvey Howard quickly proves to be the heppest cat on campus. And why not? Even at this point, near the end of his movie career, Crosby continued to exude the effortless cool that set the standard for generations of pop stars to come."

What's on the Web?

A couple of things, in passing. If you are an avid fan of mobile phones and Twitter, then you may want to purchase the first ever Bing Crosby App. Your phone will need to be an Android (as opposed to Apple) and you will also need to find posts on Twitter more interesting than watching paint dry (I fail on both counts), but if you do, then here is the place to look - http://www.appbrain.com/app/bing-crosby/com.a441197501505c1497ae2d92a.a04482058a


www.bingcrosby.com
00:47
05:47
associate Johnny Mercer in an old time radio
The Edsel Show
Oct 13, 1957: Bing sings with his guests Rosemary Clooney, Frank Sinatra and Louis Armstrong.
The Edsel Show
Oct 13, 1957 – "Now You Has Jazz" w/Bing and Louis Armstrong and His All-Stars
Person to Person, CBS-TV
Dec 3, 1954 – Edward R. Murrow interviews Bing and son Lindsay at the Crosby home.
The Bing Crosby Show
Dec 11, 1961 – 1st TV special taped in England; "White Christmas"
Bing Crosby and the Sounds of
Dec 14, 1971 – Kathryn joins Bing on a duet of "Christmas Island" to the enjoyment of Nathaniel.
Family Interview
KCRA-TV News, Sacramento
Philco Television Playhouse - NBC
Dec 19, 1948 – Bing's television debut, with the Bob Mitchell Boys' choir, "Silent Night"

Secondly, I have mentioned previously the official website for Bing, www.bingcrosby.com, and it continues to get better and better. The "Video Vault" now contains so much interesting material, excerpts from TV shows, films etc and since it comes from BCE, the quality is fantastic. One example is a 5-minute clip from Bing's 1960 TV Show for Oldsmobile, where he and Johnny Mercer re-create the golden age of radio. Take a look.

Happy listening!

ken@kencrossland.co.uk **http://www.kencrossland.co.uk**

(Editor: Many thanks, Ken. As Ken said in our last issue, there are many Bing collections appearing on i-tunes and Amazon for download. Most are simply compilations of songs most of us will have many times over. Among those seen recently are: "Christmas Anthology - Remastered 2012" (55 songs), "Christmas, Holy Time" (12 songs) and "White Christmas Wonderland" (12 songs). Often they are riddled with mistakes such as "I'd Like to Hitch a Ride with Santa Claus" sung by Bing and Doris Day! It was of course Lindsay Crosby accompanying Bing and the track is also ruined by an echo effect. Another classic on the "Christmas Anthology" collection is "Christmas Feeling" with Frank Sinatra dueting with Mr. Crosby. In fact, it's Gary Crosby joining his Dad on "That Christmas Feeling". The buyer should therefore beware but the good news is that you can usually preview a portion of each track before purchasing.)

For College, For Life

Members will recall that when the Crosby Pro-Am ended at Pebble Beach, Kathryn Crosby set up a similar competition at the Bermuda Run Country Club in Winston-Salem, North Carolina with the aim of supporting local charities. Well, it's still helping many people as Michael Breedlove reported in the *Winston-Salem Monthly* on September 1st. Bing would be very proud!

****

Now in its 20th year, Crosby Scholars is paving the way to college for thousands of Forsyth County students

The morning sun is spilling through the campus of Wake Forest University as a group of 80 local eighth-graders arrive onsite. It's a Wednesday in early August around 10 a.m., a time when most students are still blissfully enjoying their summer breaks—not touring college campuses. But for these kids, the day affords a glimpse into the future and reminder of what they're working toward.

The students are part of Crosby Scholars, a program that's exclusively available to Forsyth County students in grades 6 through 12. As one of the program perks, students in eighth grade are invited on a day-long campus crawl that tours several local colleges.

As they file into Wake Forest's robust Welcome Center, a few curious eyes start scanning the scene. "So this is what college looks like," says one voice. For many of them, it's the first time they've ever set foot on a college campus. They grab a seat in the center's auditorium and are greeted by Hattie Mukombe, WFU's associate dean of admissions. "If you guys haven't started thinking about college, let this be your wake-up call," she says. "But considering you're all Crosby Scholars, I'd say you're off to a great start."

Crosby Scholars began in 1992 with a few hundred students in two local high schools. It now extends to every middle and high school in the county with nearly 7,000 participants. At its core, the program aims to get every student into college by providing things including academic training, workshops, career fairs, and scholarship dollars. In exchange, students must attend certain classes, engage in community service, keep a minimum GPA of 2.0, and stay drug-free.

The program has a remarkable success rate: 100 percent of seniors enrolled graduate from high school while 98 percent go on to higher education. "Crosby Scholars helps students every step of the way," says Executive Director Mona Lovett. "It's open to students from all walks of life. We have some students who are valedictorians and some who make average grades; some whose low-income and some families who are not eligible for financial assistance; some who attend Ivy League schools and some who choose community college. The thing that unites them is a common desire to go to college."

The program has its roots in the famed Crosby Celebrity Golf Tournament, which ran for 16 years at Bermuda Run Country Club. In 1992, the event's longtime sponsor, Sara Lee, decided to use some of the tournament proceeds to give scholarships to deserving Forsyth County students (hence the name Crosby Scholars).

While the golf tournament was suspended in 2001, the scholars program rolled on. Funding now comes from the Winston-Salem Foundation, Kate B. Reynolds Foundation, United Way, WS/FC school system, and other community pillars. A scaled-back version of the golf tournament was created several years ago to raise additional funds for the program. Called the Crosby Scholars Invitational, the tournament is held every spring at Bermuda Run and attended by the tournament's original host, Kathryn Crosby, widow of Bing Crosby. "From the beginning, I've always thought Crosby Scholars was a wonderful thing," she says. "All the students I've talked with are so amazing and bright...I'm just so proud to still be involved."

Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Dinah Shore inducted into golf Hall of Fame

On October 30, Bing, Bob Hope and Dinah Shore were inducted into the Southern California Golf Association's Hall of Fame at a ceremony at Universal City. The Hall of Fame is designed to single out honorees, "who represent those who brought the game to Southern California, who nurtured it through early decades into the first great Golden Age of golf course construction in the 1920s, who kept it alive during the Great Depression and World War II, and who had a vision for growth in the post-war era."

Melissa Montgomery-Lynch, Nathaniel Crosby and Linda Hope were on hand to accept the honor on behalf of their parents in front of a crowd of more than 250 people.

Our own **Maureen Solomon** was there too and reports: "On Monday night they had a night cocktail/dinner at Lakeside Golf Club. First time I was there and it's truly beautiful. They had many large photos of Bing, Bob, Dinah on easels. It was an intimate evening for members and people from the Southern CA Golf Association. And the paintings of each were there as well as the artist.

I met Dinah's son Jody, daughter Melissa, and grandson. Was seated next to Nathaniel and we spent a good twenty minutes talking about Florida and some other interesting subjects.

The following day, Tuesday, they had a big luncheon at Universal and this is where the photos and speeches by family members took place."

A well-deserved honour for Bing!

Bing Crosby
Hollywood

November 29, 1944

Captain Charles Donatelli
Co. "C", 48th Armd. Med. Bn.
APO #252, c/o Postmaster
New York, N. Y.

Dear Captain:

You are certainly a nice fellow to remember your promise and send me the pictures taken at Melun when our little show appeared there for the 3rd Replacement Depot. Incidentally, they are very fine pictures. If you have any extra prints of the one in which the comedian, myself and the little girl appear, the one in which she appears alone with the accompanist, and the one with the four performers together, I know they would appreciate copies.

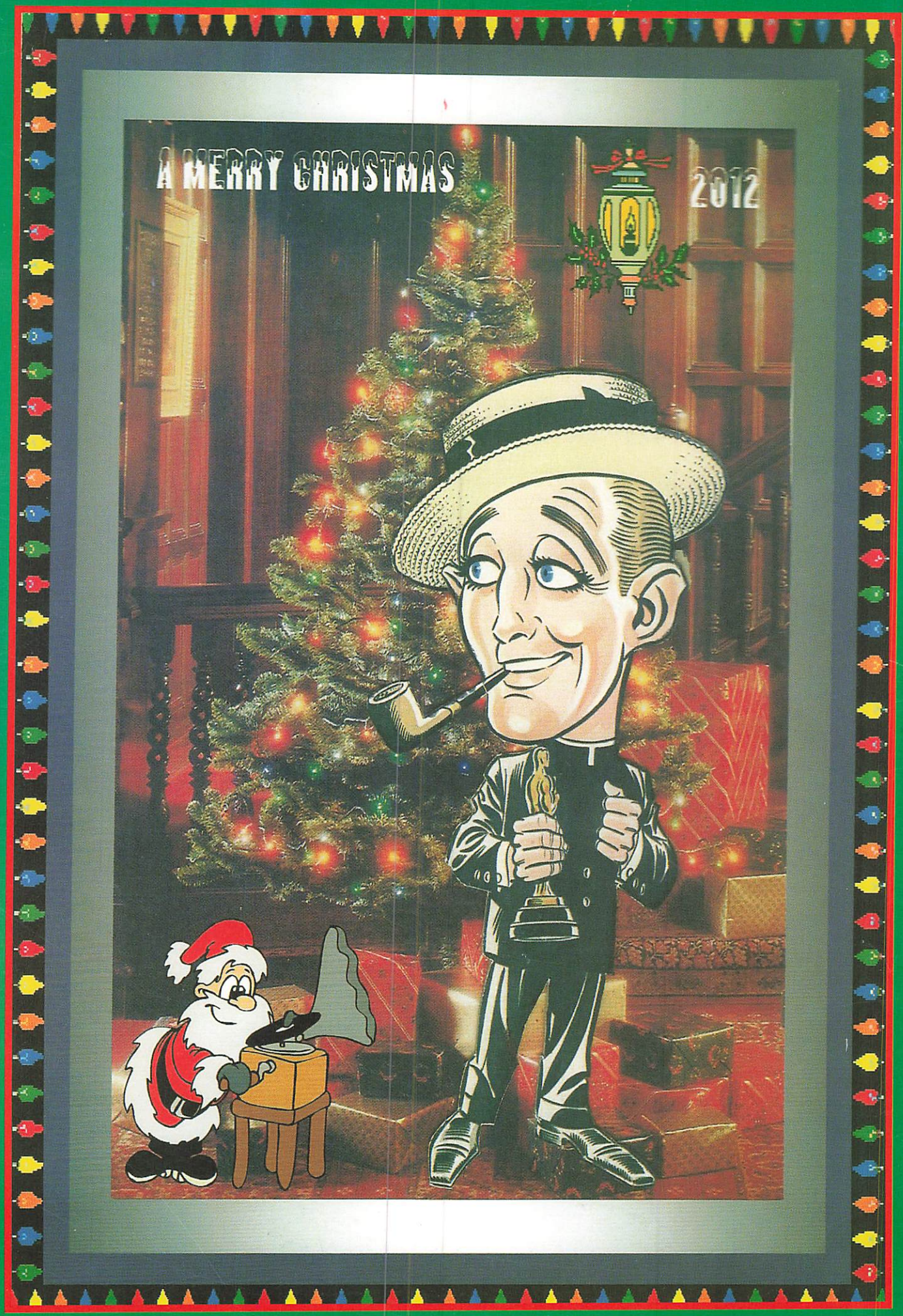
If there is any way I can serve you here in Hollywood, feel free to call upon me.

Hope you and your pals soon get out of the mud of France, and back home where you long to be.

Sincere regards,

Bing Crosby

BC:be



Designed & printed by dh3 digital ltd., Print Works, Broadwood View,
Ropery Lane, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham DH3 3NJ U.K.
Tel:+44 (0)191 387 4248 Email: gary@dh3digital.co.uk